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MONOGRAPH

ON THE

Religious Sects in India

AMONG

The Hindus

By

D. A. PAI, B.A.,

Assistant Curator and Secretary, Victoria and Albert Museum, Victoria Gardens, Bombay

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BOMBAY:
THE TIMES PRESS,
1928

To

CECIL LAURENCE BURNS, Esq.,

Late Curator and Secretary, Victoria and Albert Museum,

and

Principal, Sir J. J. School of Arts, Bombay,

This book is respectfully dedicated by the Author.

FOREWORD.

During my period of office as Deputy Municipal Commissioner (1925-1928) I had the privilege of controlling the administration of the Victoria and Albert Museum, held in trust by the Bombay Corporation in accordance with the arrangement entered into with the Government of Bombay, and ratified by the Police Charges Act, 1907 (*vide* section 89 C of the City of Bombay Municipal Act, 1888). I came in contact with the learned Curator Mr. E. R. Fern, who introduced to me his Assistant, Mr. D. A. Pai, the author of this Monograph on the Religious sects in India among the Hindus. Simultaneously the Commissioner Mr. Clayton desired that I should go through the Monograph and express my opinion as to whether the Book was worth publishing under the patronage of the Corporation. The examination of the text showed to me that the Bombay Corporation had the good fortune of securing in their service a genuine scholar of Indian antiquities in the person of Mr. Pai. The proposal to publish the Monograph initiated by me was supported by successive Municipal Commissioners Messrs. Kirpalani and Clayton and finally accepted by the Corporation under the advice of their Special Committee namely Markets and Gardens Committee.

A museum intended for popular education must be equipped with explanatory monographs relating to the collections exhibited. A specimen of fine art or model must be capable of rousing the "Muses" of the visitor and the enigma of some of the curios must be solved by explanatory notes relating thereto. The learned Curator has provided two catalogues relating to the prints of Old Bombay, and to the Industrial section of the Museum; and his Assistant Mr. Pai has now placed before the public his researches on the Religious sects of India. In this monograph the models of devotees of various religious cults of Hinduism—past and present—together with their paraphernalia in the form of dress, rosaries, sect marks, etc., are explained by means of illustrations. Hinduism with its wonderful mythology and occultism is symbolic in its expression, and those who do not understand the symbology of the various Gods cannot be expected to appreciate the depth of religious emotion underlying the ritualistic forms of worship. The founders

of the various religious creeds of Hindus lived their lives according to their religious convictions, and variety of forms of devotional fervour becomes explicable only when we know the correct facts about the lives of the various saints or Gurus. Mr. Pai has been able to present a vivid historical background of various religious sects of Hindus, the models of which are kept in the Museum. Human beings, according to a Vedic text,* express only one-fourth of what they think and feel; while three-fourth of the contents of their thought and feeling is enveloped in the labyrinth of the Goddess of Speech. It is hoped Mr. Pai's admirable monograph will reveal to the general public to some extent the hidden contents of religious thought and emotions underlying the religious collections of the Museum and if this object is achieved the time and labour which he has devoted to the preparation of the monograph will be amply repaid by consciousness of good work done without an eye towards a monetary reward which sometimes lessens the dignity of a genuine work of Art.

" Elysium "
Shahi Bagh,
Ahmedabad,
12th July 1928.

N. D. MEHTA,
Deputy Municipal Commissioner
(on leave) and
Retrenchment and Reforms Advisor of
The Bombay Corporation.

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* " Chatwari Vak Parimita Padani
" Tani Vidur Brahmana ye Manishinah
" Guha Trini Nihita Nengayanti
" Turiyam Vacho Manushya Vadanti (Rig. Vedā II 3-22-5.).

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM,

Bombay, 12th April 1928.

THE writer of these pages claims no merit for originality. They are the result of his endeavours made in past years to provide some information in a readable form to the public of Bombay, or at least to such who visit the Victoria and Albert Museum, on the different religious sects to which the Hindu population belongs ; and amongst whom one may find throughout the length and breadth of India a vast majority,or at least those who call themselves orthodox, wearing sect marks on their foreheads differing in drawing and colour. The idea to start making a collection of clay models showing the different sectaries with the different sect marks painted on their foreheads was thought of about twenty years back, as such a collection was expected to prove highly interesting and instructive, showing at a glance brought together so to say in a small room the models of persons of different sects in which modern Hinduism is divided. The proposal though somewhat ambitious, found great favour with the then Curator and Secretary Mr. Cecil L. Burns, and it is due to the encouragement which the writer received from him from time to time, and also to the present incumbent of the post Mr. Ernest R. Fern, that the collection was brought to its present condition ; and the letter-press written which is now being offered to the public. It is an humble attempt to trace as far as possible the history of the origin, rise and progress of the different religious movements amongst the Hindus as could be gathered from the writings of men, whose works have come to be recognised as standard works of reference on the subject.

Before the book was given for printing Mr. N. D. Mehta, Deputy Municipal Commissioner, was kind enough to go through it, and the writer acknowledges with thanks the trouble taken by him to make the recommendation to the Municipal Commissioner, that he considered the book worth being printed under the patronage of the Municipal Corporation.

Similarly, he is also greatly obliged to Professor Pandharinath K. Telang, M.A., LL.B., who at his request was good enough to go through it and make suggestions, he thought fit, and this he has very

willingly done unmindful of the great personal inconvenience caused to him. The suggestion to illustrate the book more profusely than what was thought of before with the object of making it more useful and interesting was made by Mr. H. B. Clayton, C.I.E., I.C.S., the Municipal Commissioner, and it could be carried out, as well as the printing of it under the patronage of the Municipal Corporation chiefly because of the great trouble he took to place the proposal before the members of the Corporation, and induce them to accord their sanction. To all of them I must express my deep obligations, as without their support and sympathy it would have been impossible for me to get the book published.

D. A. PAI,

Assistant Curator and Secretary.



A. Xamadoli

Worshipper of Çiva called Kapalika.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Vedas, which are the source of all the later practices and philosophy of the Indo-Aryans, mainly consist of hymns composed by the earliest bards known as Rsis, who counted amongst them certain pious and learned families. These had obtained pre-eminence in those times by their knowledge of performing religious sacrifices and the gift of composing hymns. To them, Nature was a living presence with whom they could hold communion. The Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the Sky, the Dawn were regarded as divine. The worship of Nature pure and simple, is the earliest form of Vedic religion. Soon reflection set in, and the different phenomena were deified. The feeling, that everything was transitory, that man was weak, and that it was necessary for him to count upon the help of higher spirits in times of danger and difficulty was natural, and nothing could at that early age answer to the feeling so well as the boundless and bright phenomena of the Heavens, which was deified and supposed to be invested with moral attributes. The Earth came in next for her share of adoration, and the union of the two—Heaven and Earth—was supposed to produce everything. The Sky was worshipped under the name of Varuna. He was supposed to preside over the regions of the sky and waters, and came to be considered as the Supreme God upholding heaven and earth and establishing the "Rita"—the Divine Law, which is fixed and immutable. He was supposed to be harsh to the guilty, and gracious to the penitent, when he came with prayer and oblations. This marks the beginning of the doctrine of trust in divine forgiveness to a worshipper, which in later ages developed into Bhakti. With the conception of the establishment of Divine Law, the affairs of the world were conceived to be working according to it in a harmonious whole. Then as the Aryans advanced further east and felt that their existence and prosperity depended mostly upon the seasonal and timely falling of the rains, they appealed to the sky, which sent down the fructifying deluge in abundance, and personified it under the name of Indra. He was considered as fighting against the malevolent demons, who kept the rains locked up and assailing their cloud castles till the waters were set free to rush down upon the earth. These fighting qualities attributed to Indra in the regions above, lifted him in the eyes of the Aryans as a martial God, and he was

freely invoked for his blessings and help. It was under his divine patronage that the Aryans were to push their conquests further as they advanced into the regions occupied by the aborigines. He soon became the cherished God of the Aryans, possessing divine authority, ruling over the universe, controller of men's destinies and the friend and helper of those who offered him sacrifices and appealed to him for special favours. In fact, he came to be looked upon as the national God of the Aryans, under whose favour the march of Aryan civilisation was to progress. Turning now to the Atharvan Veda, the composition of which is fairly considered to run parallel to the Rig, we find it to be a mixture of Aryan and non-Aryan beliefs. " The old hymns inextricably confused, the deities confounded and merged into a new pantheon, strange gods introduced with demons and goblins, incantations for evil purposes and charms to gain wordly ends composed, formulas of maledictions to be directed against enemies and magical verses to obtain children and to prolong life invented ; hymns to snakes, to diseases, to pronounce curses, composed "—such is in general outline the impression produced by the perusal of the hymns of this Vedic composition. Mention is also found of utterances of spells, charms, incantations, hymns to inanimate things, etc., in the Rig Veda, as mankind has at all times been equally obsessed with fears and superstition ; but these were neither encouraged or recognised by the bards of the Rig Vedic period. In their progress onwards, the early Aryans came in contact with wild and barbarous people worshipping snakes, demons, and other mischievous spirits, but because of the paucity of their numbers the only alternative left to them, was to absorb the barbarous hordes and bring them up to a higher level, as the new-comers could neither swamp the aborigines nor could allow themselves in their turn to be destroyed by them. The result was that along with the people, the rites and superstitions of the older people became absorbed—in fact the religion of the Aryans accommodated itself to its new surroundings. The practice of magic, sorcery and witchcraft, the belief in the efficacy of charms, spells, and incantations, and the belief that men could obtain powers over nature and even over gods, paved the way for asceticism to set in, for we read of great ascetics trying to obtain mastery over Nature by 'Tapas' or severe penances, such as sitting in the midst of fires, standing on one leg, holding up arms all with the object of subjecting nature and subduing gods to the will of man. But there was also

the other side, for we are introduced to the worship of Time (Kāl), Kām (Love) and Skambh corresponding to the Rita of the Rig Veda called Prajapati, Purusha, Brahm embracing all space and time, and other moral powers, thus developing further the early traces of theism, which we saw showing themselves in the worship of Varuna and Indra. Rudra in the Rig Veda was a malignant cattle-destroying power, later on associated with Civa—the auspicious, is here the Lord of animals—Pasupati thus forming a link between the Vedic worship and Civa worship of later times.

In the two other Vedas, the Yajus and the Sama the religious spirit is discovered to be more in the background, whilst the ritualistic forms assume importance. The need for prayer books is felt, lithurgy is developed, and the hymns from the Rig are taken and arranged to suit sacrificial necessities. The Yajur Veda contains special hymns to be uttered, when the altar for the sacrifice is to be erected, whilst the Sama contains hymns to be sung at the time when the sacrifice is to be offered.

Almost co-eval with these was the period when the Brahmanas were composed, which consist of ritualistic text books to guide the priests in the conduct of the sacrifices. The important among these are the Aitareya and the Satpatha. The emphasis on the efficacy of sacrifice, the observance of caste and asrams, the eternity of the Vedas, and the supremacy of the priests were advocated most in this period. The religion of the Brahmanas becomes therefore more formal, and as sacrifices came to be regarded as the *sine-qua-non* for the attainment of earthly profits and heavenly pleasures, the holding of these with men and means became most costly and consequently confined most to the rich and the powerful. On the other hand, other influences were also at work with the common people, for they equally had a heart and the need of God, the effect of which could be dimly traced in the two-fold process of religious growth, which brought about the beginning of a more intellectual development from whence sprang the Upanishads and on the other hand manifested the symptoms of the presence of that devout spirit more ennobling and popular than reflective, which finally expressed itself in the form of Bhakti. It is in this latter phase that we see the beginnings of the worship of Vishnu, Civa, and other deities which later on in the time of the Epics and the Puranas led to the formation of different sects, each elevating its

chosen deity to something approaching to sole authority and having a faith that his power is sufficient to secure for man eternal bliss and happiness.

Elevation of Vishnu to the Supreme Position and His Identification with Vasudev.

Vasudev is the name of the most worshipful, the God—the source of all that is and that is to be—the Supreme. According to the story related in the Narayaniya section of the Mahabharat of Narad's visit to Svet-dipa (according to mythology a white island in the milky ocean north of Mt. Meru) the Supreme spirit in lustre like the sun, was not to be seen by anyone, who was not solely devoted to him, and is pleased with the practice of Ekantika Dharma, that is, true worship with devotion, which finally secures for the devotee final release. This supreme spirit is named Vasudev, the internal ruler of all, and has four forms, from which proceeds the whole cosmic world. This Ekantika Dharma was first brought down by Narad, but in course of time it became lost, but was again preached by Sri Crsna to his friend Arjuna enjoining in its practice the doctrine of Nishkamkarma, that is the necessity to do one's own duty without expectancy of any reward. Another feature of this Dharma was, that it opened the doors of salvation both to women and people of the lower classes, and was liberal in its attitude towards the worshippers of other gods. All worship to whomsoever it is directed, reaches the supreme being, who alone can bestow upon his devout worshippers the choicest blessings of freedom from rebirth and absolve the repentant sinner of his sins. This religion as preached by Sri Crsna came to be known as Satvata as Sri Crsna belonged to the Satvatas, a tribe of the Yadava race and the Satvatas had adopted it. According to the researches of the late Mr. Tilak this religion appears to have prevailed in India about 1400 B.C. a view supported by Dr. Buhler, who is of the opinion that " The ancient Bhagvata, Satvata or Pancharatra sect devoted to the worship of Narayan and his deified teacher Crsna—Devakiputra dates from the time long anterior to the rise of the Jainas in the eighth century B.C." The name Bhagvata is given to it because of its association with Bhagvat, a prominent name of Vasudev from a deity called Bhaga considered to be the bestower of all blessings, and also because it includes the teaching of the Vedas, the doctrines of the Sankhya and the Yoga embellishing

these with its doctrine of devotion. This religion of Vasudev worship prevailed in the time of Panini about the seventh century B.C. according to the opinion of the late Sir Dr. Bhandarkar from a reference to certain Vasudevakas meaning worshippers of Vasudev. Also in the Mahabharat, the composition of which has been ascribed to a period between 500 B.C. to the fifth century of the Christian era, the Supreme Lord is addressed as Vasudev.

Vishnu originally a Vedic deity, identified with one of the Solar Adityas began to rise in importance in the time of the Brahmanas, his claim resting on the legendary accounts, contained in the Satpatha Brahmana, of the part he played in the performance of the sacrifices by the gods, and the three strides he took encompassing the world, the last being the highest called "Paramam Padam." This none can transgress and is supposed to be the final goal and abode of eternal bliss. Later on during the Upanishad period, we find Vishnu's abode mentioned as the highest place of bliss sought by the human soul in his journey through the cycles of birth, thus providing for the ordinary mind an adorable object with a more defined personality. Vishnu then came to be regarded as one with the Supreme Spirit Vasudev.

Identification of Crsna with Vishnu and Vasudev.

In the Chandogya Upanishad Crsna, son of Devaki, is mentioned as a pupil of Rsi Ghora Angirasa. Into the question of identity of this Crsna Devakiputra with the Crsna of the Rig Veda waiting with an army to fight Indra, or Crsna—the boy god of the Abhiras, a nomadic tribe of cow-herds, we need not go; it being sufficient for our purpose to accept that Crsna—the son of Devaki, whom tradition had already held in esteem as a warrior, philosopher and a Yogeshwar (one who has mastered Yoga) came to be regarded as an Avatar of Vishnu. By the term Avatar, it is generally understood that God descends into the man at the call of human need from time to time, this intimate relation being supposed to survive in the individual even after death in whom it was realised. Jointly with this doctrine of incarnation was also expounded the doctrine of Bhakti with which God should be worshipped. Bhakti is an attachment through emotion distinct from knowledge and action, and when it becomes instinct with religious feeling binding man and God, it leads to the perception of the divine. In its nature it is indescribable, and its essentials are that it should be supreme and be without

expectancy of any reward in return. It is open to all; the weak and the lowly, the literate and ignorant, and it is also the easiest of all other modes recommended in old times. It involves separateness between man and God; and for man to be in tune with God, Bhakti demands on his part utter humility and throwing himself entirely on His mercy. Man should have the continual desire to serve God, and to do acts for his glory. The work should be absolutely unselfish, and should be done without expecting any reward in return. He should be free from all desires. In return, God assures that He will take up such a man with all his failings or shortcomings.

The introduction of the doctrine of Avatar or God taking a human form at the call of need, and of Bhakti led gradually to the change in the religious ideas of the time, and have supplied nourishment for devout souls in India through the long period since they were first conceived. An account of how this feeling of supreme devotion affected the minds of people throughout the land through a galaxy of saints and pious men will be found in the sequel.

Historically the literary record of the religious movement in India begins from about the time of the composition of the Epics, when the Brahmins had regained their lost supremacy in the field of religion and were actively engaged in recasting their literature and religious doctrines with the result that the movement towards theism, which we saw springing up towards the close of the Upanishad period was given full expression in the Epics. The Epics had given a fresh sanction and importance to the popular devotion to Bhagvat, and the interpolation of the Gita in the Mahabharat turned it into an important document exalting Vishnu-Crsna and his cult side by side with other documents exalting Civa and his worship. Here we see the beginnings of two rival sects each claiming for its favourite deity the first or even the sole place in the God-head, and which exercised an influence greater over some classes than others, and in some places than in others. It is to be remarked however that the Vaishnavite cult influenced a greater number on account of its theistic tendency, as by its association with Crsna it was able to emphasise the personal characteristics of the object of its worship.

Similarly in the other Epic, we find Rama like Crsna of the Mahabharat reckoned as one of the Avatars of Vishnu. It is

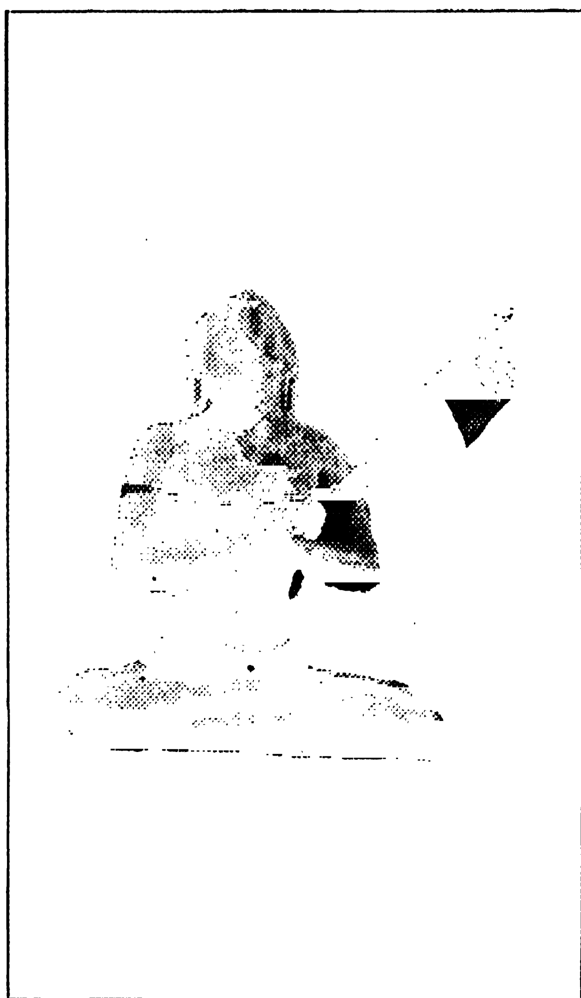
difficult to say when this took place, as there is no evidence to show before the composition of the Narayania section of the Mahabharat, and the composition of Raghuvansa that Rama was eagerly worshipped, though he seems to have been recognised as an Avatar of Vishnu from the circumstance that he was depicted by Valmiki the author of the epic as a high-souled hero. The epic as well has a marked importance in the subsequent religious history of India, and may be considered to have laid the foundation of his cult.

The Neo-Brahmanism, as we may call it now conceived in the epics, prevailed in Northern India with varying vicissitudes of fortune till about the rise of the Guptas, when it gained additional strength. During their rule Hinduism embracing the worship of Vishnu, Civa, Durga and other gods flourished vigorously throughout the whole of Northern, Central and Western India. The Gupta Kings were ardent devotees of the Vaishnava Faith, and they were mainly responsible for adopting the worship of Sri or Lakshmi with Vishnu, thus sowing the germ of the later Lakshmi-Narayen worship. The history of Neo-Brahmanism of the time till the death of Harsha is a glorious record of great literary activity in religion and philosophy, of religious toleration, of temple building—these being endowed with lands and riches, and enriched with costly presents consisting of valuable gems and ornaments. The principal literary activity of the period with which we are concerned is the composition of the Puranas, which as their name signifies, mean " ancient ". But it is not the ancient books we have in these Puranas, but ancient subjects dealing mostly with popular conceptions of creation, Time, Universe, etc., and some very old material which the writers found convenient to handle. But their chief use was made by the sectarian writers as vehicles of sectarian preaching and we have in consequence Puranas written to further the cult of Vishnu, Civa, Durga and other deities.

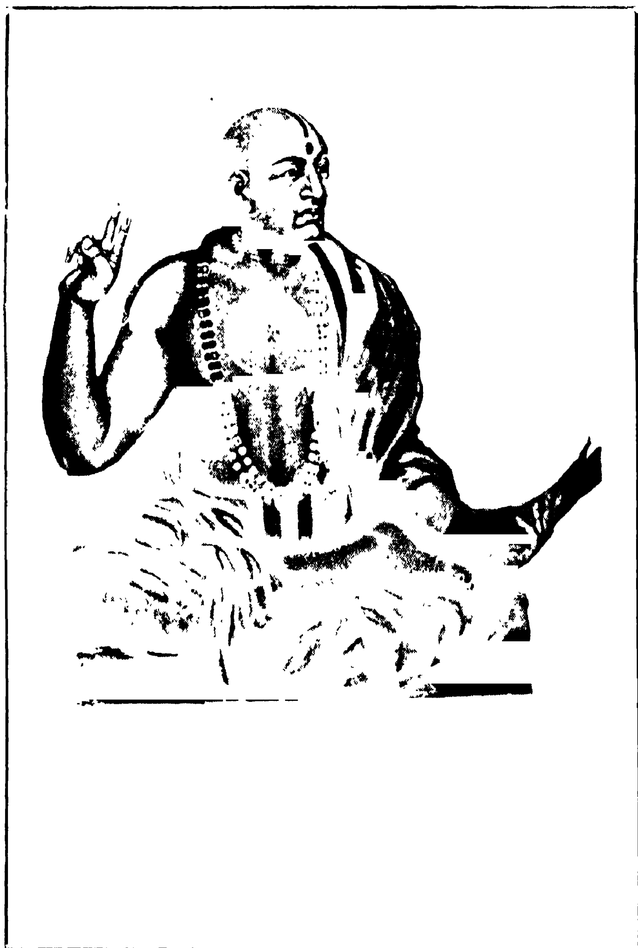
A reference may also be made in passing to the composition of Pancharatra literature, the date of which it is difficult to ascertain. It is also uncertain where they were first composed, but the balance of probability seems to be according to the opinion of some authors that most of the literature was written in the north, whereas they received some additions in the south especially in the land of the Tamils. A very noteworthy feature of these writings is that its literature deals with one or the other sectarian division, or some

changes in the doctrine of worship, and it marks the beginning of Sakta principles such as Yogic practices to attain of miraculous powers, attributing efficacy to the use of charms and mantras, and the necessity of wearing sectarian marks. These particularly emphasise the prohibition of offering animal sacrifice and food.

After Harsha's death, northern India was in the throes of political struggles with the result that Brahmanism lost in that part of the country its pre-eminence for a time, though destined to gather strength and flourish in the far-off land in the south known as the country of the Tamils. This was brought about by a band of poet-singers, who wandered from shrine to shrine composing hymns in the dialect of the land and singing them before the images of their Lord. The questions how and when Vaishnavism migrated to the south can hardly in the present state of our knowledge be answered satisfactorily, but there is sufficient evidence to show that it gathered strength at the hands of these poet-singers, who are honoured with the title of Alvars. The key-note of their songs is supreme devotion to Sri Crsna or Vishnu in his other incarnations. They extended their teaching to all irrespective of caste, and the use of the dialect of the land brought the worship nearer to the people's heart. They were the fore-runners of the new school of Sri Vaishnavism started later on by the famous Nathmuni the first of the Acharyas, who rendered noble service to the faith in his time. The doctrine of the new school was to start a reaction against the then prevailing priest-ridden systems by insisting upon a life of purity and morality, to denounce all action done with motive for reward, and to insist upon man doing his duty in agreement with the doctrine propounded in the Bhagwadgita. The work which was thus begun, was completed in the succeeding years by Sri Ramanuja the greatest name in the history of Vaishnavism. The faith as preached by him appealed more to the common people and won them to its worship because he emphasised devotion to a personal God, and thus opened the way of salvation to the lower classes no less than to the higher. He adopted the works of the Tamil Alvars in connection with the service in the temples, but preached exclusiveness in religion in confining worship only to the Vaishnavite pantheon, as opposed to tolerance to every form of belief that each god is but one form or other of the Nameless One. In his philosophical teachings he preached what is called Vasistadwait. Another



Sri Ramanujacharya, 1027-1137 A.D. Founder of the Ramanuja School



Sri Madhvacharya, 1199 A.D. to about the middle of the 13th century. Founder of the Madhava Sect.

stone in the philosophical construction of Vaishnavism was placed by Sri Madva, the expounder of the Dwait system. According to him the world is real, God, who is the efficient cause of the universe the substance of which is eternal, is real; and the individual soul is also real. Salvation is secured through Bhakti, which procures deliverance from Samsara or worldly life, and a life of bliss and perfection in the presence of God. Much emphasis is laid by him upon what might be called the sovereignty of God, the relation of the human soul to him being of complete dependance on him, as that of a master and a servant.

Vaishnavism as preached by these two teachers is seen flourishing in the south, each gaining new adherents to the faith, and we find it vigorously flourishing in the dominions of the Vizianagar Kings who were then at the height of their power and glory, but further north across the Tungabhadra in the country of the Marathas, it was progressing under a different complexion. The movement originated in the efforts made by a galaxy of saints and prophets, who then adorned the land, in the words of the late Mr. Justice Ranade " to make the nation more humane, and at the same time to hold together by mutual toleration, and to suggest and partly carry out a plan of reconciliation with the Mahamadans, with the result that it tended to raise the nation generally to a higher level of capacity both of thought and action ". Socially it raised the Sudra class to the position of spiritual powers and social importance, and gave sanctity to the family relation and raised the status of women. It modified the strictness of the spirit of caste exclusiveness. To the religion of the people it gave a literature of considerable value in the spoken language of the land which exercised a great influence on the thought of the people subordinating the importance of rites and ceremonies, of pilgrimages and fasts, of learning and contemplation to the higher excellence of worship by means of love and faith. The deepest desire expressed in the words of the poet and saint Tukaram is :—

" Find, Oh find, some means or other
To bring God and man together. "

It checked the excesses of polytheism centring all worship and devotion round one God Vithal, another name under which Sri Crsna is worshipped at Pandharpur. Hence the movement is better known as the Pandharpur movement, the first impetus being

given to it by the poet Dnyaneshwar, and it appears to have closed cir. 1649 when Tukaram "passed to the blessedness of his union with God".

Just about the same time we find a similar current of love and faith dominating the minds of the people roused by a similar movement associated with the name of Sri Ramanand, who, tradition asserts, was one of the successors of Sri Ramanuja. Finding the caste prejudices intolerable, he left his southern home and proceeded to Benares, where he established a Matha, whence flowed the clear stream of loving Faith to Rama and Sita, that spread its channels far and wide in the land of northern India, and which fed with delight not alone the Brahmins, but a chamar, a Rajput, a Jat, a barber, and even a Mahamadan, and in which he combined in a harmonious combination the tenets of two polemic creeds. The first great name we find coming under Ramananda's influence is that of Tulsidas, who though known to fame as the author of the great Hindi poem dealing with the exploits of Rama exercised a great influence on the minds of the people, as he lived for them and loved them, taught them the best that he knew in his own language and in poetry which reaches the heart, and holds the mind in thraldom to the service of God.

About the close of the twelfth century a new form of worship was associated with the name of Sri Crsna, which primarily was meant to express the fervour of extreme devotion and ardent love towards God, but through the writings of an extravagant and unbridled character was turned into a creed, where the ideal of life was thought to consist in social enjoyment than in contemplation and mortification. The movement however was destined to be short-lived, and a way to better understand the relations between God and man was opened. This work was mainly done by Sri Vallabha. He preached what is known as the Pushtimarg or the path of acquiring grace of the Almighty by means of unalloyed Bhakti and renunciation of Tan, Man, and Dhan (Body, Mind and Wealth) to his service. That this doctrine was capable of producing the best of its kind, is very finely exemplified in the person of Mira, who gave proof of her devotion to Crsna by renouncing for love of him her kingdom and husband. Mr. G. M. Tripathi in his lectures on Gujrathi poetry remarks "In a thousand sweet and homely songs, the broken heart of Mira sung itself out, and the love which the Rana had claimed in vain was poured upon the



Sri Vallabhacharya, 1479 A.D.?
Founder of the Vallabha School.



Sri Shankaracharya, 788-820 A.D.

divine and invisible ideal of her soul, and her songs live to this day". Another name which deserves a mention is that of Chaityana or Lord Gauranga, as he is called in Bengal, who though cultivating the emotional side, endeavoured to win the hearts of men by instituting Kirtans recommending chiefly devotion. He preached spiritual devotion, condemned caste distinctions and admitted every one to be his pupil.

Reference has already been made to Vaishnavism being carried back strongly tinctured with the element of Bhakti by Ramananda, and a strong desire to make it more popular among all classes irrespective of caste across the Narmada and how his teaching influenced the celebrated author of the Hindi Ramayan purely Hindu in thought and expression.

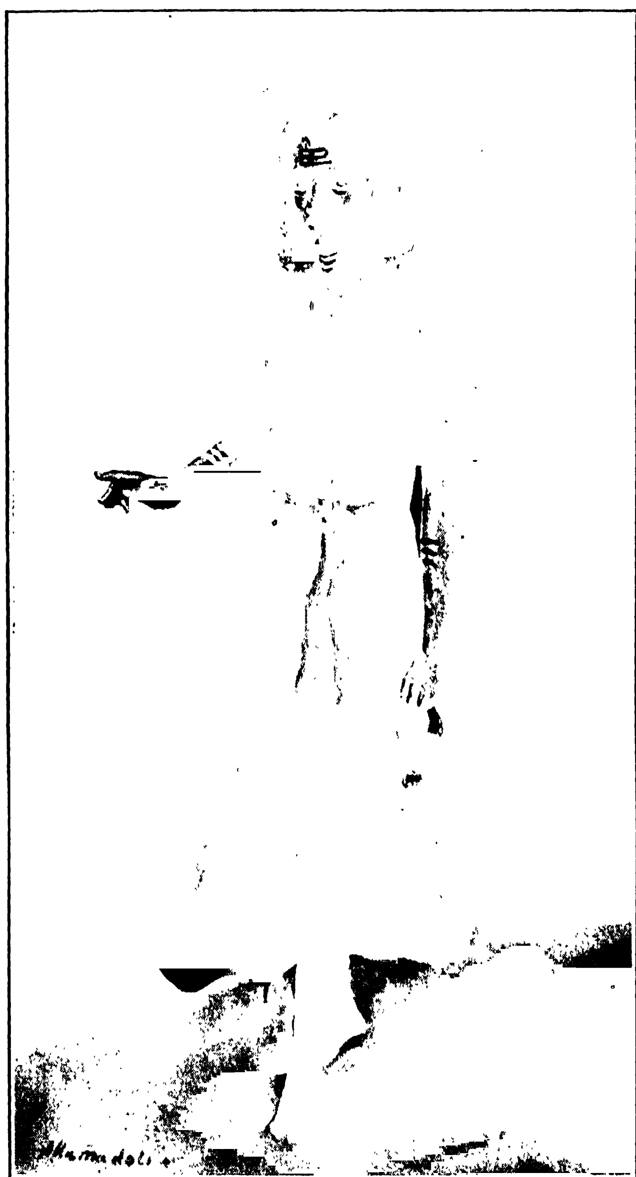
Different in character was the note struck whilst preaching the doctrine by his other follower Kabir, who addressed both Hindus and Mahamadans. Though controversy regarding his parentage is not still at rest, yet it is almost agreed that he was a Mahamadan by birth, brought up under Hindu influences. According to Nabhaji, the author of Bhaktamala, " Kabir refused to acknowledge caste distinctions, to recognise the authority of the Hindu Schools of Philosophy, nor to attach any importance to the teaching of the Brahmins. He preached that religion without Bhakti was no religion at all, and that asceticism, fasting, pilgrimages, had no value at all unless these were accompanied by true devotion. He had no preference for any of the two polemic creeds. He saw God both in Nature and in man, and the verses he composed and addressed God touch both the heart and the mind. The faith he taught and preached, may be said to be eclectic in the sense that he combined what he found to be the best in the religions of the Hindus and the Mahamadans more particularly in that sect of the latter, who are known as Sufis, who not unlike the thinkers of the Vedanta hope to enter after death into a stage of bliss with God. This doctrine of the Sufis found entrance into the Hindu heart, as it did not differ much from their own, and the ease with which the Sufis fraternised with Hindu ascetics and other religious men led to the development of mutual respect for the two faiths, the Hindu and the Mahamadan, which belonged to the Sufi sect.

The last name in connection with this movement fathered under Muslim influences is that of Nanak the founder of the Sikh faith.

Having learnt under Hindu and Muslim teachers and knowing both Hindi and Persian, he became well acquainted with the writings of the Sufi and Hindu saints, and these he freely used in his preaching. In his religious opinions he was one with Kabir and he maintained that both Hinduism and the religion of the Mahamadans were two paths to approach the same God. He praised more the family life than asceticism, and his leanings were on the whole more towards the dogmas and the tenets of Hindu philosophy. How such a creed teaching principles of inward devotion and commending a way of a quiet and meditative life was changed in after years into one preaching violence and fanaticism is a marvel in the history of religious faiths in India.

Cult of Civa.

In the two varied kinds of phenomena which Nature presents, the early Aryans saw the power of the Omnipotent, but that which appeared to them to be terrible and dispiriting and wrought destruction they named Rudra. They also believed that the same power of the Almighty, which brought about ruin and destruction, was turned into a benignant deity if appealed and appeased by prayer, and so they named it Civa—the auspicious. Thus we have the early idea of Rudra-Civa signifying the power of the Omnipotent at first terrible and dreadful, but when appeased, was willing to listen to the prayers of men and grant them the coveted boons. This idea of Rudra-Civa appears to have been further developed under the wave of theistic influences, and songs and hymns were composed praying for the preservation and protection of the worshippers and their dependents and belongings, till at the close of the Vedic period Civa came to be looked upon as the Supreme Power protecting men and children, the cattle, healer of diseases and the guardian deity principally of the people and tribes living in forests and lonely places. In the Atharvan Veda, Civa is called Pasu-Pati, meaning Lord of animals, thus forming a link between the Vedic Civa and Civa worship of later times. In the time of the Yajur Veda, Civa was worshipped by the warrior class as the early idea of fierceness connected with his name found favour among the Kshatriyas. But it was not until the composition of the Svetasvatara Upanishad, almost co-eval with the composition of the Gita that elevated notions about the nature of God, and his relation with man were transferred to him, and his worship suffused with feelings of



Worshipper of Civa called Pasupata as described by Bana in King Harsha's time.



Worshipper of Civa called Pasupata (ascetic).
Follower of Lakula in Bana's time 6 A.D

intense love advocated under the impulse of the teaching of Bhakti, which was then stimulating men's minds in carrying everything before it in matters of religion. Here he is the supreme lord to be worshipped with complete self-surrender, his devotee undertaking the observance of the Pasupata vow consisting in giving up anger and greed, practising forgiveness and insisting upon the use of ashes signifying the transitoriness of all mundane things. In this may be discerned the germ of the Pasupata sect, which came into being in early times before the celebrated grammarian Patanjali, about 150 B.C., afterwards reorganised by Lakula about the second century A.D. and which came down right to the time when the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsiang visited India in the middle of the seventh century. Just about the time, when the Pasupata sect was reorganised, a new school of thought in Civa worship became enshrined in books called the Agamas. The followers of the school were known as Maheswaras or older Civas worshipping Civa under the name of Maheswara not differing much from the ancient Pasupata sect. These also prevailed right upto the seventh century of the Christian era. Then there was the Saiva school, which developed in later times, and which though agreeing with the Pasupata sect in the belief that the Supreme and the Individual souls are distinct, differs from it in the belief that in the delivered condition, the individual soul becomes Civa himself, that is, attains perfect resemblance with God Civa himself without the power of the Creator, whereas the Pasupatas hold that he attains boundless knowledge and power of action. Then there were the Kapalakas and the Kalamuks about whom an account is given in the sequel. Mention of all these is found in the epics, and by the time these were composed, the worship of Civa had become general, and more widely spread especially because of the fact that it had been lifted up from the hands of the lower classes and accepted by the higher and literate classes of the people ; and from the various accounts given in the epics, his character as Mahadev appears more prominent. Hence he is looked upon as a powerful, wrathful and impetuous God, but bountiful and generous when appeased, and though the worshippers are enjoined to bestow equal honours on Vishnu and Civa, there is little to indicate the extent which his worship attained at the hands of the south Indian saints at a later age.

We have so far seen that it was in the north more than in the south that the vast influence, which resulted from the composition

of the Svetasvatara Upanishad prevailed upon the Civa cult. In the south we know according to the opinion of Mr. R. D. Bannerji from sculptural evidence of the Bhita and Gudimallam lingas that Civaism prevailed from very early times, far earlier than the first century B.C., and that it existed in those parts of the country now included in the presidency of Madras. But it appears that in those very early days, the worship was mostly confined to the Dravidian people conjointly with the worship of demons, goblins and other mischievous spirits. It was not however until the rising tide of Neo-Brahmanism during the period of Gupta rule which had a more humanising effect on the different religious cults, had made itself felt in the south that this cult was being gradually purged of all excesses that had gathered round it, and elevated to a position acceptable to the people refined and cultured, chiefly through the labours of Kumarilla Bhatta. This new form of Civaism, as might be called modelled in agreement with the teachings of the Epics, Agamas, and Puranas prevailed as far south as Mysore to the beginning of the tenth century of the Christian era. But further southwards in the Tamil land, it was destined to enter fully into its own and to disclose itself at its best. Whether this was due to any influence coming from other quarters or it grew quite independently is a question of doubtful solution, but if it is supposed that there was any outside influence which brought about the change, it is supposed to have come, as Dr. Barnet holds it, from Cashmere, where a new school of thought formed on more humane and rational principles, and claiming its origin to the Svetasvatara Upanishad, came into being. But it would be an error to conclude, if the above opinion were accepted that all the best which we find in the Tamil Civa cult is due to the influence of the Cashmere school, as the lofty ideals it places before its followers, and the view of the relations between man and God it holds, could hardly be expected to sway the popular mind in its favour, but for another powerful force that was set in motion at the time by the lives and soul-stirring compositions of a group of poet-singers, who devoted themselves to the service of Civa. These are known as Adyars, and they have done for Civaism what the Alvars did for Vaishnavism in the south of India. The period of the activity of these saints can roughly be stated to lie between the sixth and the eleventh century of the Christian era, and it produced a very extensive literature " richer in devotion, instinct with brilliance of imagination, fervour of feeling and grace

of expression". The greatest of these, who exercised so enduring an effect upon the south Indian faith is Manikka-Vasagar, whose sacred utterances are full of the most intense religious feeling. A Prime Minister to a Pandyan King, Civa revealed himself to him as his Guru, and the result was that "he went from the council and put on the shroud". He visited temples composing songs in celebration of the various sects of Civa worship, and the result was permanent. He represents the height of Civa Bhakti of southern India. His work, as also of the other saints has an abiding influence, as it sent down its roots deeper in the human heart.

Finally the rise of the Lingayet sect may be ascribed to a spirit of jealousy and rivalry entertained by some classes against the Brahmins, the Buddhists and the Jains. It was meant to give the Civites a more definite theology and a closer organisation, and this was brought about by opposing the teachings of the Vedas, doing away with caste distinction and introducing changes in social customs, and admitting the worship of one God only, namely, Civa. The effect of this movement was to paralyse the existence of the Jains in south India, and to banish Buddhism.

Saktism or Devi Worshipping Sect.

The exclusive worship of the female principle, as distinct from the Divinity seems to have had its germ in the idea that when the One personal God wills to put forth Energy for the purpose of creation, he is held to possess a double nature partly male and partly female. Thus in the Rig Veda, it is stated, that when the universe was about to be developed there arose in Him, Desire. The idea of the union of desire with God is exemplified by the concept of Heaven and Earth joining together and creating the universe. Later on in the Brahmanas and the Upanishads we find this duality more clearly explained, for we find mention of the condition of the One Being unhappy without a second. He divided himself into two. Thus we have here a distinct personality given to the power of God, which was named his Sakti.

Another set of notions of some antiquity, which contributed to form the notion of Sakti were derived from the teaching of the Sankhya system, which taught the separate existence of two principles Purush and Prakrati, both co-eval and co-existing independent

principles, the play of which was deemed to be necessary for creation to take place. The Vedantists, though following the same teaching, subordinated the working of these two principles to the will of the Creator and they identified the Prakrati of the Sankhya working in combination with the three Gunas (qualities) as Maya.

Later on the female principle was conceived of as Maha Maya and worshipped under different designations and invested with a variety of forms chiefly through the teachings of the Puranas, amongst which the Mahabharat contains the earliest references. Here we find mention of the worship offered to a virgin goddess supposed to dwell on the mountains, delighting in offerings of flesh, wine, and animal sacrifice and worshipped by the aborigines; thus showing that by the time the epic was composed, the early goddesses whom the Vedic people venerated and offered prayers, and who represented the personified forces of Nature, had changed places in favour of those worshipped by the aborigines and whose worship was associated with rites and ceremonies having no Vedic sanction. The worship of the female principle was thus gradually introduced, and about the sixth century of the Christian era, when the Samhitas and Agamas came to be written and promulgated, the Sakta element gave prominence to the belief that like Vishnu and Civa their consorts, who represented their creative power, could also be identified with Brahm of the Upanishads and so were supposed to be the only reality from which creation evolved. A new sect is thus clearly seen establishing itself and recognising the female principle as the first cause of creation, and it was easily provided with a new theology, a varied cult, and fresh literature—the latter collectively known as Tantric literature, the authoritative text of the Saktas.

To a Sakta, Maha Maya identified with Brahm is the summit and source of all beings. Below her are arrayed in ranks the consorts of Vishnu, Civa and Brahma, and a hierarchy of complex and variable female powers such as the great Mothers—personifications of the productive and nourishing powers of nature, the sorceresses whose interference is always mischievous and capricious, the Dakinees, Sakinees and other classes almost all malignant. Inconceivable in her supreme essence, Maha Maya is invested with a variety of forms corresponding to one of the aspects of her twofold nature—benevolent and cruel; the former conceived as presiding over the

creating energies of life and protecting it, and the latter presiding over the destructive forces. The consorts of Brahma and Vishnu as Maha-Saraswati and Maha-Lukshmi are always identified with the benevolent aspect of Maha Maya, and the worship offered to these goddesses is of a public character and according to Vedic and Puranic rites. In the case of Civa's wife, the cultus offered to her has a twofold character corresponding to her mild and fierce aspect. In the first case, she is associated with Civa, the auspicious, and is worshipped under the names of Gouri, Parvati, Amba in a public manner with rites and ceremonies not differing from those as are observed in the case of the consorts of Brahma and Vishnu. Whereas in the second, she is mentioned as presiding over other minor goddesses controlling epidemics, sicknesses and evil spirits such as Goblins, Dakinees, Sakinees, etc., and is worshipped under the names of Maha-Kali, Chamundi, etc., in accordance with Tantric rites, when the worship is accompanied by offerings of blood and wine. The worship is conducted in a secret and secluded place and generally confined to a narrow circle of votaries. The object with which the goddess is worshipped differs in its character from that which the Vedic or Puranic worshipper has. To the latter it is to become quiet, subdued, satisfied, patient and collected and see the Self in self and all in Self. To the follower of Tantraism efficacy in the use of charms, acquisition of potency in incantations and superhuman powers with a view to gain wordly pleasures or power, to subdue or destroy enemies are the most cherished objects of desire. No wonder that such a system found many adherents, and according to a suggestion was encouraged and retained as necessary in the fight with the religion of the Buddhists and the Jainas and for winning over the masses who were outside the pale of Hinduism. Happily, however, Tantraism as described above appears to be on the wane, as the spread of education, study of ancient books in their true perspective, and a better understanding of the relation between God and man are having their effect on the popular mind slowly though steadily, it will not be long before Tantraism gives way under the influence of modern theistic movements.

According to some Western scholars Tantraism contributed more to the development of the emotional side of the Vaishnavite and Civite faiths, and thus opened the door for certain erotic practices to creep in as, for instance, they see in the creed associated with the

worship of Crsna and Radha. With due respect to their great scholarly learning with which they have tackled the subject, it is pleasing for a while to turn from these critics to the writings of modern Indian scholars who have alike given much thought and study, and see in the cult the striving of the human soul after the Infinite in absolute humility, complete absorption, and self-forgetfulness. True it is that in the hands of certain writers of a highly emotional type the association of Radha and Crsna taken metaphorically to describe the relation between the lover and his beloved has been treated in a manner with the result that it gave birth to certain sects developing more the effeminate side of human character, but construing the allegory in its proper light where Radha stands for the human soul and the whole action typifies its striving after the highest goal which consists in abandoning illusion of family, desertion of home and in following Crsna's flute—the call of the Infinite, and the command to leave father, mother, wife, child and everything, it asks the devotee to " Follow him ". That such was the ideal meant in the story, and that it was attainable was fully exemplified by the work and life of Mira, who through love for the Lord abandoned wealth, husband and kingdom and found her lasting rest, as the story goes, in the image of Sri Crsna.

Buddhism and Jainism.

The sixth century before the Christian era was an age of great religious ferment in India. In the Vedic period we saw the development of religion from the most primitive Nature worship to an advanced stage—that is, where the natural phenomena were conceived of as being possessed of a soul in which they were personified, deified, and anthropomorphized into a polytheistic group. The prominent characteristics of these gods were power, and they were always regarded as beneficent and looked upon as friends and protectors of mankind. This was followed by the Brahmana compositions which contained expositions of the sacrificial ceremonial in all their details made more elaborate and complex. In these we find a definite development of the caste system, and learn how the Brahmins who were supposed to hold the secret of the powerful sacrifice gained a dominant position. A later development of the Brahmana period was the Arayanakas or Forest literature which is more theosophic in character and is a transition to the Upanishads which expound a new religion in opposition to the ritualism of the Brahmanas.

In their teaching they aimed not at securing earthly and afterwards heavenly bliss by the offering of sacrifice, but at obtaining deliverance and freedom from rebirth by the absorption of the human soul into the world soul of Brahm by means of correct knowledge (that is knowledge of God). This Brahm has been described negatively in the Bṛhadaryanaka Upanishad as " without physical or other qualities, as immortal thinker and knower, as the eternal in which space is interwoven and which is interwoven in it." Parallel with this doctrine of salvation, was developed the theory of transmigration which appeared in its earliest form in the Satpatha Brahmana by way of retribution of karmic action in the guise of repeated births and deaths. Whilst this system was being developed there were also growing by the side of it two other systems which are known as the Sankhya and the Yoga.

" The former does not refer to the idea of the absolute. It reduces the universe to a multitude of individual subjects which have nothing true about them, but only their subjectivity, which has no creative power and is not properly realised at all by having an objective content. In other words, this is the Purusha or the spirit. This comes in contact by an error with the world by the operation of Prakrati (Nature) with its three constituent factors called the Gunas—the Sattva the intellectual principle, the Rajas the active and emotional principle, and the Tamas the dark and gloomy principle. These in the passive condition of Prakrati are in a state of equilibrium, but in the process of evolution development takes place differently in the several psychic apparatuses producing varied characters of men and life. Through the operation of Purusha and Prakrati there arises the principle called Buddhi (Intellect), which is the first element of the subtle body—the Linga (Astral) which is the essence of the individual and which is subject to transmigration. Buddhi serves as the basis for development of Ahamkar (Egoism) from which is derived on the one hand the Mind (Manas) and the ten organs of sense—five of perception and five of action; and on the other hand the subtle elements from which in their turn come the gross elements. The Linga, which is called the psychic apparatus contains in itself all the elements down to the subtle elements, and even of gross elements it has the fine parts, and it is through it that the individual subject experiences the facts of the world. This experience is painful and unhappy even though alleviated by the joys of the earth, and the real aim of life is to be rid of this

connection with Nature. But that connection does not really exist, it is only thought to exist through error, and when the error of ignorance is removed, the connection ceases to exist—the subject Purusha being freed from any connection with an object and Prakrati is freed from any pain or trouble, for being absolutely unconscious in the absence of the subject there is no possibility of its suffering or enjoying anything." This is the Sankhya view of life.

Yoga, on the other hand, differs from it in its adoption of theism and in following ascetic practices. It means yoking of the mind with a view to concentrate thought on the Absolute by means of exercises to regulate breathing, sitting, and restraining the senses.

These two systems of thought prevailed in India long before Buddha appeared on the scene and had been so thoroughly rooted in men's minds, that since then they have formed the basis with certain modifications of all the later schools of Indian Philosophy. Besides these there were the Charvakas, who held that pleasure is above all the *summum bonum* of man's life without caring for any retributive punishment here and hereafter. The other systems Nyaya and the Vaiseshika were more complimentary and independent of religious belief.

No wonder in this congeries of indefinite views regarding the nature of God and the relation of Man to Him, in the different views held regarding what was meant by final beatitude and the means recommended for its attainment varying from pure and simple prayers and rites to the performance of costly and laborious sacrifices, in cold contemplation, in the subjection of the people's minds to the control of priesthood, people felt and welcomed the presence in their midst of two men, who alike both in birth and rank stepped forward and proclaimed to the world after subjecting themselves to a severe course of discipline of conduct and contemplation that they had obtained true knowledge, the one by Enlightenment and the other by Conquest. Both Gautama Buddha the Enlightened and Mahavir the Conqueror, founders of these two religious movements were contemporaries, belonged to the Kshatrya class, were descendants of families of good position and both in the early part of their lives abandoned their home and family in search after the true path to escape pain and suffering of this mundane life. In

this they made no sudden departure, but effected reform consisting in refusing to accept the divine authority of the Vedas, in presenting a common opposition to certain unreasonable practices of the Brahmins, in preaching that salvation was possible to all irrespective of caste and creed and in introducing the use of the vernacular in their addresses to the people in preference to the classical Sanscrit, which few could understand.

Philosophically the teachings of both appear to have been permeated with the Sankhya doctrine of seeking release from rebirth, and they seem to accept the theory enunciated by the Upanishads about the transmigration of the human soul and its subjection to the laws of Karmic action. Both accepted the Sannyas Marga (Life of renunciation) recommended by the Upanishads for the attainment of final beatitude. Buddhism as preached by its founder was pure and simple. His system was practical. He regarded life as full of suffering and believed that his teaching served the remedy for restoring mankind to a state of complete happiness. He taught that the cause of suffering was Desire, and sought to show the way how Desire could be extinguished by carrying out the eight requirements of the noble path. He laid great emphasis on monastic life, in which according to his teaching, Nirvan or the extinction of Desire might be obtained. For practical purposes, he laid down rules for the guidance of both the monks and the laity who were his followers. The order of monkhood was open to all male and female followers with the proviso that the initiate was to be over fifteen years of age and free from any incurable disease. He was first to serve a preceptor and after ordination he was fully informed of the life of destitution and stern morality he was bound to lead. After some years of practice in this his changed life, he joined the great fraternity of the Buddhists known as the Sangham in which capacity he was treated with equal privileges in all the Buddhist congregational establishments throughout the land. The laity were under the obligation to pay attention to the teaching of Buddha, to lead a really good moral life, to abstain from injury to animals and to be liberal in their gifts to the monks and nuns. The Church founded upon such pure and simple principles, strengthened by a code of rigid morality and earnest co-operation between its own members, and crowned with glory and fame through the efforts of its royal patron—the greatest of the Mauryas occupied the

highest place in the field of religion in the land and spread its ramifications far and wide for nearly 500 years after the death of its founder, when owing to cleavage amongst its own members due to difference of opinion under foreign influences, and mainly through lack of royal support and in its struggle against rival faiths which were gathering strength showed signs of disruption and demoralisation, the first prominent symptom having showed itself in the establishment of the Mahayana School in opposition to its parent school known as the Hinayana. The Mahayana School is on the one hand the hinduizing of the old Hinayana, and on the other relaxing the rules of the old discipline so as to make it more acceptable to the Indian layman of the time and hordes of foreigners and others in the land. The rise of this School is probably to be placed towards the latter part of the reign of King Kanishka and it owed much to the labours of Asvaghosha and Nagarjuna—the two most notable figures connected with its history. According to the tenets of the new School, Buddha is represented practically as God who has lived for countless ages and will live in the future for ever as well, and ever willing to lend his ear to the prayer of his worshippers. A new hierarchy is introduced, who are known as Boddhisatvas, that is, those who drawing near the final state of enlightenment, but refuse to enter Nirvan in order that they might help mankind, and these became more the object of veneration and prayer with a view to their intercession. There is also a distinct change in the idea of Nirvan. According to Buddha, Nirvan was freedom from pain and rebirth, whereas the Mahayanist idea was that the worshipper was born in a western paradise where he will live for ever in joy and pleasure and obtain final release. About two or three centuries later Buddhism showed signs of still further demoralisation by introducing the worship of the gods of the Hindu Pantheon, and use of magical charms and spells and yogic practices for the purpose of obtaining supernatural powers thus opening the way to the acceptance of Tantric principles which utimately led to its overthrow and decay.

Like Buddhism, Jainism is also considered to be a movement of reform against the unreasonable practices and teachings of the Brahmins; but it accepted the view then held on the theory of transmigration of the soul of man, that he is fettered to its mundane life by the laws of karmic action, and that release from rebirth is

obtained by man by means of the acquisition of right knowledge. For the attainment of this knowledge, it advocated the Sannyasa Marga on which much stress was already laid by the Upanishads, laying too much emphasis on "asceticism consisting in subduing senses, withdrawing from worldly things, from communion with people, begging for alms, living in forests, observing cleanliness, internal and external, abstinence from injury to living beings, and sincerity, purity, freedom from envy, kindness and patience." The origin of the movement has according to the Jains been ascribed to Rishabha, but according to the opinion of Prof. Jacobi and other scholars, Parsva or Parasnath, who is assumed to be a historical personage was the real founder of the sect. He enjoined upon his followers four great vows (1) not to injure life, (2) to be truthful, (3) not to steal, (4) to possess no property. Any trustworthy account regarding his life or any of his successors seems hardly to be known till the time of Mahavir who is supposed to have died in the year 468 B.C. and about whom much trustworthy information is found amongst Buddhist sources of information. Him the Jains regard as the last prophet and the most famous propagator of their faith. He is more looked upon as a Reformer of the faith in making a further advance upon the teachings of his predecessor. To the four vows enjoined by Parasnath on his followers, Mahavir added the fifth, namely, to observe chastity and enjoined on his ascetic followers to divest themselves of all clothing in preference to wearing of clothes which Parasnath did not object. He laid down rules for the guidance of the clergy and the ascetics and these were enjoined to lead a strict moral and ascetic life. On the other hand the laity were charged with the duty of maintaining them and rules regulating their conduct were laid down. In fact he set up an organisation which though modified by change of time and circumstances has continued down to the present time conforming to its pristine character. But Jainism was to prove no exception to the rule in India that dissensions must sooner or later prevail and undo the work of the past. Even during the time of the prophet different opinions came to be openly pronounced, and its authors succeeded for a time in attracting some followers, but the powerful personality of Mahavir was able to eclipse them all but after his death the smouldering fires were rekindled and ultimately divided the Jains into two contending parties, which have survived till the present day. However, it must be said to the credit of Jainism and its followers that the

organisation of the community, the inflexible conservatism in holding fast to the original institutions and doctrines, the firm support which the Jain church continued to receive from its followers, the absolute refusal to admit change have contributed immensely to its keeping its own place in the religious systems of India till the present day.

Sect marks used by the Vaishnavites

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12

1 *Sri Sampradaya founded by Sri Ramanuja.*

2 *Do.*

3 *Do.*

4 *Made by the Ten-galai section of the Sri Sampradaya*

5 *Made by the Ten-galais*

6 *Made by the Vada-galai section of Sri Sampradaya*

7 *Do.*

8 *Followers of Sri Madhva*

9 *Followers of Sri Madhva*

10 *Followers of Sri Ramananda*

11 *Do.*

12 *Do. at Dwarka*

Sect marks used by the Vaishnavites—*contd*

13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24

13 Followers of Sri Ramananda at Dwarka

14 Do

15 Do

16 Followers of Ramananda but worshipping Janki

17 Followers of Kabir

18 Followers of Sanaka Sampradaya founded by Nimbarak

19 Followers of Sri Vallabha

20 Do.

21 Followers of Sri Chaityna or Lord Gauranga

22 Followers of Malukdas, 1574

23 Followers of Ramcharan, called Ram Snehees, about the middle of the 18th century

24 Followers of Charandas, called Charandasees, about 1730.

Sect marks used by the Vaishnavites—*contd.*

25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32
33	34	35	36

25 *Followers of Charandas called Charandasees*

26 *Do.*

27 *Followers of Pran-Nath, called Pran Nathees*

Emblems of Sri Vishnoo

28 *Chakra or the Quoit*

29 *Do.*

30 *Lotus or the Padma*

31 *Conch or the Shell*

32 *Indian club or the Gada*

33 *to 36 Followers of Sri Ramananda*

Vaishnavism and Its Followers.

Vaishnavism developed out of the old Bhagvatism is the name now given to that form of religion of the Hindus, which by the practice of Bhakti and Faith, worships Vishnu and recognises him to be the one Supreme God, and which creates in the minds of its followers a belief that they by the practice of Bhakti and faith in him will ultimately be relieved from rebirth by securing a permanent place in that part of the celestial heavens known as Vaikuntha over which He presides.

The worship of Vishnu dates from the time of the Rigveda, and though a few hymns are addressed to him, he is by no means unimportant. He was the first among the Adityas—Solar impersonations, and as such according to the ideas of the time, he represented the Sun in its daily and yearly course. In his anthropomorphic form he was represented as a young man of huge proportions, taking the three strides by which he encompassed the whole world. Herein, may be found the germ of the story of the Vaman incarnation of the Puranas. He is also called the germ of the sacrifice in one Rigvedic passage, and also figures as a leader in battle very often helping Indra in his encounters. From this position in the Vedas, he began to rise in importance in the time of the Brahmanas and Aranyakas, until in the Upanishads, he was elevated to the position of a Supreme Being. In the Maitryana and Katha Upanishads, we find the " Self " identified with Vishnu, Civa and Narayan. Though looked upon as such he was far from being recognised as the One Supreme God, but we have the beginning of an idea which was developed later in the Epic and the Puranic age, where the sectarian name Vaishnava is attached to his worshippers, who worship him exclusively. Once elevated to the supreme rank, he became more and more estranged from his ancient solar character, and in the Puranas and later writings he is represented as sitting enthroned in Vaikuntha with his consort Lakshmi or Sri the Goddess of Beauty, Victory and Prosperity. Retiring gradually to a distance, he assumes the functions, which formerly belonged to Brahma. His identification with Narayan, who appeared in the beginning of things as floating above the primeval waters as suggested in the Taittiriya Aranyaka, was now made complete. According, as he sits or sinks back into mystic slumber, he gives birth to creation or draws it back again into

himself. But it is not so much by himself that he interposes in the affairs of the world and receives the homage of men, as by means of his incarnations which are explained as " the presence of once mystic and real supreme being in a human individual, who is both truly God and man, and this intimate union of the two natures is conceived of as surviving the death of the individual in whom it was realised." The number of these incarnations is variously stated, but at present ten is the accepted number. Of these, the Varaha, Narshimha and Vaman as Trivikram are worshipped by a few worshippers ; whereas his incarnations as Rama and Crsna claim by far the largest number of votaries. Buddha who came later on to be reckoned as an Avatar, had a large following for some time, but now his votaries are not so numerous in India.

It may now be observed, that there is very little inner connection between the Vedic and the Brahmanic Vishnu worship and the Bhakti religion which is the essence of modern Vaishnavism. The idea of a God of grace had long ago been adumbrated in the hymns of the Rigveda addressed to Indra, Agni, and Varuna, and though according to the researches of some scholars, some hints in the Brahmana literature are observed regarding the progress which Vishnu was making to the position he had held as the Supreme God of those in India, whose hearts were filled with Bhakti it is not till we come to the Narayaniya section of the Mahabharat, that we have some positive information regarding the Bhakti School. According to it, the religion wherein Bhakti played a very important part, identified with Bhagavata, Ekantika, or Pancharatra religion was obtained by Narada from God himself; and though the date of the Pancharatra religion is uncertain, its existence has been satisfactorily vouchsafed for in the teaching of the Gita, which is traditionally accepted to have been first told by Sri Crsna to Arjuna on the battle-field on the eve of the Mahabharat war, fought about fourteen hundred years before the beginning of the Christian era.

It is stated in the Bhagavata and Vishnu Puranas that the interval between King Parikshiti's birth and the accession of Mahapadma is counted as 1,115 years. King Parikshiti is stated to have been born soon after the close of the Mahabharat war. Mahapadma—the first of the Nandas—ascended the throne about the year 361 B.C., and counting 1,115 years from the date back-

wards, we come to about 1,400 years in round numbers to the time of birth of King Parikshiti. Whatever view modern scholars may hold, Hindu tradition accepts the fact of Sri Crsna's participation in the war on the side of the Pandavas, and of the role he played as a warrior, councillor, and expositor of the religious doctrine, that is now enshrined in that priceless book the Gita.

It is an irony of fate that in India when treating of any past event of great historical importance, we are suddenly confronted with the difficulty of assigning to it its proper date and the difficulty is more embarrassing when we are at the threshold of an inquiry concerning Sri Crsna's life.

Inspite of the absence of any genuine writings of historical importance, which will give us a connected life-story of Sri Crsna modern research has been able to pick up here and there in the ancient post-vedic Epic and Puranic lore some gleanings wherewith some idea of the life-history of the deified hero can now be given.

Born in Mathura as the son of Devaki, the early days of Sri Crsna's life were spent in the land of Vrij. At the proper age he received his education befitting the rank and position of a Kshatrya Prince studying the Vedas, the Upanishads and the then two prevailing systems of philosophy—the Sankhya and the Vedanta under his famous teacher Rshi Sandipani who then lived in Ujjain. Yoga too had its own charms for him, and in Rshi Ghora Angirasa, who was a worshipper of the Sun-God, Sri Crsna found a teacher by whom, it is supposed, he was initiated into the tenets of philosophy of which he became afterwards the greatest expounder. Thus fully equipped, he assumed the role of a warrior and statesman, and after killing Kansa, the then King of Mathura, and subjugating all the neighbouring princes, his reputation as a warrior and statesman became firmly established. He then removed to Dwarka and established a kingdom of his own probably the first colonization of the Kshatriyas in this part of the country. Whilst here in Dwarka, news reached him that the Pandavas closely related to him through his aunt Kunti, were being deprived of their rightful claim to a portion of the kingdom by the Kurus, and were reduced to sore straits by Duryodhan their chief Prince. He therefore decided to go to Hastinapur, the seat of the Kurus, and

try for an amicable settlement of the claim before appealing to the tribunal of war. When mediation failed, and war decided upon, Sri Crsna enlisted his sympathies on the side of the disowned princes, the sons of Pandu. Apparently he took a subordinate part in actual warfare contenting himself with being merely a charioteer of his friend Arjuna, one of the Pandu Princes; but the priceless teaching on the due performance of one's own duties according to Dharma (Duty), as in this case of a true Kshatriya and its reward here and hereafter which he then gave to his friend, raised him up at once in popular estimation as the founder of a monotheistic religion known as Ekantik Bhagavatism, which spread itself first among his co-tribals the Yadavas, Satvatas or Vrishnis, and then gradually beyond the range of that tribal communion, and finally through the length and breadth of India. The Indian disposition to combine religion and philosophy asserted itself in this case as well, and resulted in giving a philosophical base to the new religion. For this purpose the two oldest systems, which prevailed long since were utilised, namely, the Sankhya and the Yoga and the religious sentiment deepened on the basis of Bhakti meaning intense Love of God. Now turning to the doctrine of this new faith, it must be kept in view that it shared in common with the other existing faiths of the time, the belief regarding the transmigration of the soul, the retributive power of action or Karma, and the attainment of Moksha or in other words, the possibility of freedom from the distressing revolutions of life. The influence of the Sankhya tenets permeates the whole, and principally the theory of the three Gunas (qualities) with Prakrati, whilst the term Yoga is used in the sense of "self-surrender to God, devotion concentrated on God," and when further it is connected with Karma, it is used in the sense of "Conscientious performance of one's duties without regard for personal interest."

God, according to the Bhagavata faith, exists and rules the world eternally. In his relation to mankind, he is merciful to those who "know" him and are devoted to him with all their hearts; and he emancipates from sins everybody who resorts to him entirely. Here we find the doctrine of divine favour, which is met with in some of the Upanishads and which consequently played so predominant a part in the evolution of Indian sects. With regard to "matter and spirit," Matter though Eternal is changeable;

whereas " the spirit " having detached itself from the divine soul, is eternal, imperishable, and not subject to change. In the beginning the Spirit is inactive but only when it comes into contact with Prakrati and the three Gunas, he is moved by Desire to perform action, the enjoyment of the fruits whereof causes rebirth. The duty of a man is to behave himself so that his soul breaks through the shackles of Prakrati and returns back to its starting point—the God. This is effected in two ways, renunciation and striving after knowledge or dutiful and disinterested action. The second is regarded as preferable and the proper Ethical ideal; the first is not eschewed altogether as it was fairly rooted in the thoughtful minds of the Indian people for centuries past. Whichever of the two ways of salvation one might betake himself to, one must overcome the difficulties inherent in the constitution of man's nature, which, if one adopts the second, it is " Greed " he is to combat against; and if one adopts the first, it is " Ignorance ". In preference to these, the Bhagavata Faith recommends a different course, namely, Bhakti—complete self-surrender to God. From devotion to God springs knowledge of God, and this knowledge so works that the faithful offer up all deeds to God and leave the fruit to Him. Bhakti guarantees to everyone irrespective of caste or creed the certainty of Emancipation—which is to be regarded as an elevation of the soul to God-like existence as an individual continuance in His Presence.

If there is any historical nucleus in Sri Crsna's participating in the war between the Pandavas and the Kurus, his time goes back to a very high antiquity, but the existence of a sect of his worshippers is first confirmed by a literary evidence of Panini, who lived about the seventh century B.C. Panini mentions " Vasudevakas " in the sense of worshippers of Vasudev the pre-eminently worshipful. The next stage in the development of the Bhagavata religion is characterised by its brahmanisation and identification of Crsna with Vishnu who was then considered to be the Supreme Reality. The great popularity of stories with which the personality of Crsna was connected, and the correct appreciation of the many advantages of equating Crsna with Vishnu just to be able to combat the influence of Buddhism, must have excited the interest of the Brahmins and they found it in their interest to admit the Bhagavatas into their own ranks and to reckon Crsna among the

Avatars of Vishnu. The earliest trace of this movement is seen in some of the later revised Upanishads, where there is a tendency towards the exaltation of Vishnu and Civa as symbols of Brahm, and this is ascribed to a period between 500 and 300 B.C. Megasthenes in his account of Crsna describes him as Heracles and states that the strongest adherents of Vasudev with whom Crsna was identified were to be found in the Mathura region. He was held in high esteem by the Sourasenoi, who possessed two large cities Methora and Cleisobora (Crsnapura) and through whose country flowed the river Jobares (the Jumna).

In the next century we find very little mention made of the Bhagavatas and this is probably due to the fact that Asoka openly avowed for Buddhism, and his active propaganda had pushed the rival creeds to corner. About the year 185 B.C., the Sunga dynasty rose to power and we read of Pushyamitra's determination to revive Brahmanism by celebrating the old rite of horse-sacrifice. All restrictions against animal sacrifice and Brahmanism were removed. Just about this time the literature of the Brahmins was recast and the movement towards theism, which had already been started in the later Upanishads, found its full expression in the two Epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharat. Both the epics underwent considerable transformation and enlargement and the religious phenomena in the two was significant of the fact that the prominent divinities, Brahma, Vishnu and Civa stood on terms of equality in the popular mind. Still more prominent is the fact that Rama and Crsna, the heroes of the ancient epics, became now to be recognised as incarnations of Vishnu, and herein we have one group of worshippers exalting Vishnu and another exalting Civa. The final composition of the Gita about this time had an immeasurable influence on the religion of the time. Here Vishnu is now closely identified with the Supreme Soul, and Sri Crsna is declared to be his full incarnation, and received the title Bhagavan. Naturally, therefore, about the year 150 B.C. when Patanjali lived we find Crsna Vasudev looked upon as a divine being, closely identified with the Supreme and in consequence, his worship had greatly prevailed and the stories connected with his life (such as, for instance, the Killing of Kansa, etc.) had come to be looked upon with so much reverence that they formed the subject of dramatic representations similar to those connected

with the mystery plays of mediæval Europe. The Gasundi inscription and that on the Basnagar column which belong to this period, show that the Bhagavata religion (which had adopted Crsna worship) had by this time overstepped the limits of the land of its birth and spread to Indian border lands, and that it secured the conversion of some non-Aryan people. In proof of this we have the Garudahvaja of Vasudeo built by Heliodora—a Yavana ambassador. The inscription on the Basnagar column also furnishes us with the first clear indication of the apotheosis of Crsna. That this was a fact already accomplished in the century immediately preceding the Christian era is demonstrated by the inscription in the Nanaghat Cave, where we find that Vasudeo is invoked, and further this inscription is of the greatest interest to show that the Bhagavata cult had spread to the southern portion of the country, where it captured the hearts of the people of the Maharastra, and thence it was taken to the Tamil land, where it was advocated by the soul-stirring appeals of the Alwars.

Coming now to the first three or four centuries of the Christian era, we find that in Northern India the Saka and the Kushan kings were either Civites or Buddhists and therefore not well-disposed toward the religion of Vasudev. Besides Mathura the cradle of the faith had now ceased to be its stronghold, as Jainism and other primitive forms of worship appeared to have prevailed. At this time in fact the Bhagavata religion was almost in a moribund state till the rise of the Guptas, when it revived, and we find it flourishing in Panjab, Rajputana, Central and Western India and Magadha. The Tushana rock inscription in Panjab containing an adoration to Vishnu erected about the fourth century A.D., the mention of King Chandra in the Susunia inscription as a servant of Chakraswami, and lastly the description of themselves by the Gupta sovereigns as Paramabhagavatas confirm the view that Bhagavataism, which had now become synonymous with Vishnuism came to the fore and spread itself to the remotest corners of the land. There are numerous instances in the shape of inscriptions, sculptures, erection of temples, grants of lands and villages in honour of Vishnu—all showing that the Vishnu cult was in full swing at the time and was the faith adopted by the Royalty as can be seen from the fact that Skandagupta, when he defeated the Huns hastened to his mother with the news of victory " just

as Crsna when he had slain his enemy betook himself to his mother Devaki." Also the much admired piece of sculptures "Sleeping Vishnu" at Deogarh, where Vishnu as the Eternal is shown lying on the serpent Ananta with the gods watching from above; and "Crsna and his mother" testify to the greatness of honours that were paid to this divinity. The reaction set up in favour of the Brahminical form of worship reached its high-water mark under the Gupta Kings; the worship of Vishnu, Civa, and the Sun became very popular with all classes of people. The Iran inscription, which contains an adoration to the Boar Incarnation, the Junagadh inscription which contains an adoration to the Dwarf Incarnation, and chronicles the erection of a temple in honour of Crsna, the homage paid to Rama Avatar by the famous Poet Kalidas, and the recognition of Buddha as Avatar of Vishnu in the Bhagavata Purana (dedicated to the glorification of Vishnu as Bhagavat) all these bear testimony to the fact that the worship of these incarnations is a special feature of Vaishnavism of the Gupta period. Another feature of the Gupta Vaishnavism was the worship of Sri or Lakshmi with Narayan as the centre of Vaishnava worship. The conception of Lakshmi as the divine Consort of Vishnu is an old one in Hindu religion analogous to the conception of Purusha and Prakrati in the Sankhya system, which seems to have affected the Neo-Vaishnavism of the time. This Enthronement of Sri with her consort begins with the Gupta Kings, and historians are inclined to cite this as a piece of evidence to show that during the Gupta period there was a strong movement for asserting the rights of women. In this, others seek the germs of the Lakshmi-Narayan cult.

Another feature of the Gupta rule was the production of the several Puranas, a body of religious writings meant more for the common people. In this composition every form of legend, sectarian theology, ritual, art, panygerics on temples, and places of pilgrimage and other topics were freely indented upon, and they were chiefly used by the sects into which the worshippers of different Gods came now to be divided, as the chief vehicle for sectarian teaching. The Vaishnavites are credited with the compilation of the following Puranas for magnifying the glory and importance of the chosen divinity Vishnu and strengthening his cult. The Harivansa and Vishnu Puran, which are of peculiar importance to show

how by the introduction of stories regarding the birth and the miraculous saving of Crsna, of his early days in Gokul, of his boyish tricks with the Cow-herds, his youthful sports among the Gopies, of his attachment to Radha introduced a new element in the original doctrine of the Vaishnava sect.

Recent researches show that the religious history of India from the time of the Guptas down to the death of King Harsha is a glorious record of religious toleration and temple building in India. The two great contemporary writers of King Harsha's time, the celebrated Court-poet, Bana and the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsiang, who came to India about the year 630 A.D., and remained in the land for about a period of twelve years, have left authentic record of the time, and these confirm the statement made above. During Harsha's time the freedom given by Neo-Brahamanism to worship any deity according to each one's desire, namely, Vishnu, Civa, Surya and other Gods, was not withdrawn, but on the other hand, it found large adherents. Elaborate and lofty temples were built in honour of these deities by kings, noblemen and rich merchants in the land, and ample provision was made in the shape of grants of land and incomes for their maintenance. Added to this, were large presents made in jewels and money from time to time by pilgrims, who flocked to these shrines in large numbers from distant places. It was only after Harsha's death, when his mighty hand was removed, which consolidated his northern Empire, that disunion among various sects brought about a complete state of chaos in the land bringing in its train ruin and devastation, which was later on completed by the Aṛabs and the Mahamadan people, who came to India from the ninth century onwards of the Christian era.

Coming now to the south, we find that it comprised the area of the Maharastra and the region occupied by the Telugu people, and it shared the same vicissitudes which the north suffered from the time of Asoka, and its history till the rise of Chalukya kings about 550 A.D. is clothed in mystery. The Andhras had once become a ruling power after 230 A.D. but their supremacy was short-lived, and as they professed the creed of Buddha, Buddhism is supposed to have prevailed in the land. But with the rise of the Chalukya kings about the sixth century of the Christian era, the Puranic Hindu religion received special attention and was made the subject of a multitude of formal treatises. Elaborate temples to

Vishnu, Civa and other members of the Hindu Pantheon were erected and the orthodox Hindu Brahmins borrowed the practice of excavating cave temples, one of the earliest Hindu works of this class being the temple erected in honour of Vishnu by Mangalesa Chalukya at the close of the sixth century. The Chalukyas worshipped Vishnu in his Boar Incarnation. On the overthrow of the Chalukyas, the Rastrakutas came into power, who were worshippers of both Vishnu and Civa. The Dasa-avatar temple at Ellora contains a figure of Vishnu on the body of a serpent. Images of Narsinha, Vamana and Varaha, images of Crsna holding the Goverdhan mountain, show that Vaishnavism was held in great esteem. This temple is supposed to have been excavated in the middle of the seventh century in the time of Dantidurga of the Rastracuta race. After the Rastracutas, the Pallavas and the Chalukya Kings again came into power. The period of the Pallava ascendency in southern India was a period of great Hindu activity in religion against the rival faiths—Jainism and Buddhism. This was the great period of the great temple builders and several temples dedicated to Civa and Vishnu owe their existence to this dynasty. Narsinha Varman was the builder of the rock-cut temples at Mahaballipuram. In fact at this time both the faiths—Civaism and Vaishnavism—flourished side by side and were patronised by the royalty and the people.

Turning now to the extreme south the country of the Tamils we find that about the end of the first century of the Christian era in the Tamil country in matters of religion there was a happy confusion. The Jains, the Buddhists, the Vaishnavas, the Civas and people of other persuasions lived in amity with each other. There were splendid temples erected in honour of the Vedic and the Puranic Gods, and Viharas of the Buddhists, and the rival systems flourished together each with its own clientele unhampered by others in preservation of their own holy rites. Under such conditions no wonder then, that we find the silent work of reforming the religion by a set of devotees, who are known as Alvars, supposed to have flourished from about the third to the ninth century of the Christian era. Traditionally these Alvars are said to have been the descendants of those Brahmins of the Bhagavata Faith who emigrated southwards at the close of the first century. They wrote mostly in Tamil, and by their writings they have contributed much to the spread of the Vaishnava Faith. In their writings, they have pursued the one dominant object of their life, the culture and develop-

ment of feelings of love and devotion towards Vishnu or Narayan, and they frequently allude to the early Avatars of Vishnu and are in special raptures in their compositions about the Crsna Incarnation. Their number is put down at twelve and their writings are generally known as Prabhandas or songs in praise of the deity. These number about 4,000. These Alvars paid great respect to the teachings of the Vedas and also held in esteem the Puranas, and adored the images enshrined in the ancient shrines at Sri Rangam, Tirupati and other places. They taught the people that God could be worshipped by a recitation of his name, service at his temple, and contemplation of his form. In course of time these Alvars became so venerated, that their images were made and worshipped along with that of God.

It is most interesting to note that the efforts of these Alvars to popularise worship of Vishnu with feelings of extreme love and devotion reflected the general feelings of the people of the time. The feeling of Bhakti had greatly permeated the mass of mankind, and it found its vent in that great work—The Bhagavat Puran, the composition of which is ascribed to a period somewhere before 620 A.D. Its chief characteristic is its treatment of the new theory of Bhakti, and some of its utterances are worthy of a place in the best literature on devotion.

It seems to be the work of a body of ascetics who lived a life of fervent devotion, in some of the forests in the Tamil land by the side of the rivers Tamraparni and Kaveri, and, who in all probability may have lived with the Vaishnava Poet singers, just referred to.

Bhakti in this work is Emotion to the full, which is inexpressible, makes the tears flow and the hair thrill with pleasurable excitement. It is produced by constant gazing on the image of the deity, singing his praises, keeping company with his other devotees, and talking and thinking about his glory and love. It is indifferent to sacrificial observances, and declares that God must be loved for his own sake and not for any reward. This can be summed as the surrender of all worldly possessions and mind to the service of God.

The most famous of these Alvars, was Satagopa or Nam-Alvar, who lived about 600 A.D. He rendered the Vedas in Tamil, and composed over a thousand stanzas in classical Tamil. He is the author of the famous "Tiruvoymoli" being the substance of Sama-Veda and he is said to be the originator of the doctrine of Prapathi—absolute self-surrender to God, afterwards elaborated and

followed by Nathamuni—the first of the Vaishnava Acharyas. Tirumangai Alvar is said to be the last of these Alvars. He settled at Sri Rangam and is reputed to have rebuilt some parts of the shrine.

Nathamuni lived during the latter half of the ninth century A.D. and the beginning of the tenth. He was probably a descendant of the early Vaishnava immigrants from the north, who settled in the south in the early centuries of the Christian era, and brought with them the Bhagavata cult and laid the foundation of the Vaishnava Faith in the south. One day while in the temple of Vishnu at Kumbakonam, he heard certain Brahmins from the southern end of the peninsula recite certain Tamil verses composed by the Alvar Satagopa, and was so charmed with the versification and music of the pieces that he set about to recover the whole extant works of the Alvar. He arranged them (the collection being called Nalayiora Prabhandam) and then introduced the system of a regular recitation of these verses in the temple during festivals in honour of the God at Sri Rangam—a system which is prevalent to the present day. Nathamuni was well versed in Sanskrit literature and is credited with the authorship of a book called Nayatatwa—a philosophic treatise from the point of view of the later Ramanuja School. He is supposed to have lent additional support to the acceptance of the doctrine, of Prapatti—which was later on developed by the Ramanuja School. Later on in life Nathamuni is stated to have visited all the places connected with the story of the life of Crsna and to have died in his village at a very old age.

The next two teachers, Pundarikaksha and Ramamisra, are better known for taking up the work of teaching and consolidating the doctrines of the New School of Sri Vaishnavas, which had come into being with Nathamuni. Now what was this New School of Sri Vaishnavism ? It was the expression of a natural reaction against the sacrifice-ridden and the Karma Kanda system resuscitated by Kumarilla, which held the field in philosophical speculation before the time of Sri Shankaracharya. The Vaishnava School instead of starting with a new philosophy remodelled the old theories by insisting upon a life of purity and morality ; and denounced all karmic action which was done for worldly or transient results. It advocated the renunciation of all attachment to the fruit of action in agreement with the teaching of the Gita. The result of this teaching was in the first place to effect a loosening of the hold on

its followers on the various minor gods and goddesses, who were then propitiated with a view to the attainment of worldly pleasures, and instead directed its followers to the worship of the Highest known to it, namely, Narayan of the Upanishads the primal cause of all things. The next notable feature of the School was that it drew to itself large masses of the people through the medium of the vernacular who were beyond the influence of Brahmanism by establishing the doctrine of Prapatti or surrender to God without any distinction of caste or creed and by adopting for religious purposes the works of the Alvars—the soul stirring verses full of devotion, and making them the common property of the Brahmins and non-Brahmins alike.

The next great teacher was Yamunacharya, the grandson of Nathamuni, who was born about the beginning of the tenth century. In his young age he showed a great precocity of mind, and as already arranged by his grandfather, his education was conducted under the care of Ramamisra. It is related of him, that one day he secured a triumph in dialectics over the Court Pandit of the day then basking in the royal favour of the then Chola King with the result that Yamuna from the time rose into royal favour, and was awarded with grants of lands and revenues derived from them for his own use. He was henceforth known as Alavander, meaning the Victor. He then began to lead the life of a householder. One day Ramamisra, his former Guru, came to him and said that he was in charge of a valuable treasure of Nathamuni in trust for him and that it was time for him to receive it. Yamuna assenting, both went to the temple at Sri Rangam, and there taking Yamuna in presence of the deity, Ramamisra made Yamuna accept Him as the treasure which Nathamuni had left for him. He then seemed to have realised the mission of his life, and soon assumed the robe of a Sannyassi and took up his residence at Sri Rangam. Henceforth he was a recluse, and spent his life in composing philosophical works and expounding the doctrine of the New School, as it came to be called. His life at Sri Rangam was simple and without any stirring event. He visited the Vishnu shrines at Trivandrum, Travancore, Madura and at Conjeveram, where he is said to have gone with the avowed purpose of casting a look on the then rising scholar Ramanuja, who had early distinguished himself and attracted the attention of the savants of the day. Yamunacharya died in

the year 1040 A.D., having expressed a wish, it is said, to see Ramanuja taking upon himself the task of supporting and defending the Vaishnava Faith.

Yamunacharya is the author of the following works :—

(1) Sidhitraya—written to demonstrate the real existence of the individual and the supreme soul in opposition to the doctrine of Sri Shankaracharya.

(2) Agamapramanya—written with the object of establishing the orthodoxy of the Bhagvata School.

(3) Gitarthasangraha—is a summary of the teaching of the Gita, which according to him was a consistent exposition of the doctrine of Bhakti supplemented by a description of the Karma and Dyan (Knowledge) Yoga as subordinate to the main doctrine.

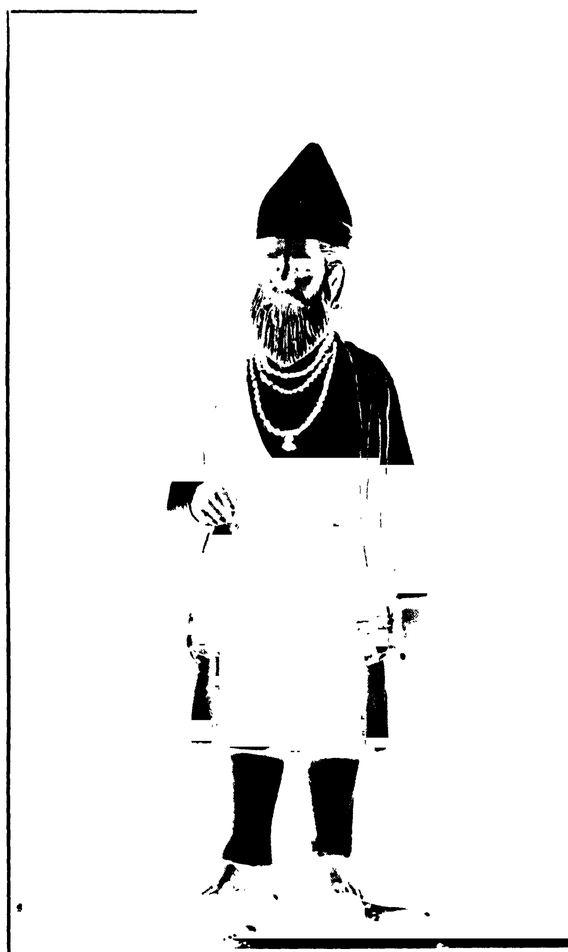
(4) Stotra-ratna—a devotional song in honour of the God Vishnu. This is described as simple and chaste in language, its imagery is natural and the sentiments are those of an earnest devotee, who pours out his heart in the most direct language he can command.

Sri Ramanujacharya—the Founder of Sri Sampradaya.

Sri Ramanuja was born about the year 1027 A.D. In his youth he lived at Conjeveram and was a pupil of Yadavapraksha who was an advaitin an advocate of duality. Ramanuja whose inclinations leaned towards Vaishnavism was dissatisfied with the teachings of his Guru. He therefore left him. He then settled at Kanchi, and applied himself closely to the study of the Prabhandas of the Alvars and drank deep in their spirit. Whilst here at Kanchi, news was brought to him of the passing away of Yamunacharya by one of the disciples of the deceased named Periyanambi, and was told that the hour had come when, according to the expressed wish of his Guru, he should take upon himself the work of "Supporting and defending the Vaishnava Faith." After performing the obsequies of the late Guru, Ramanuja returned home, but felt the necessity of fulfilling the mission of his calling. He therefore decided to go to Sri Rangam and on the way, he met Periyanambi the chief disciple of Yamunacharya at Madhurantakam. Here the two having declared the object of their wanderings, Ramanuja was taken into the temple of Rama, and there initiated in the presence of the deity, and henceforth he became a sannyasi. He then removed to Sri Rangam



Follower of Sri Ramanujacharya



Follower of Sri Kabir Saheb (Benares)

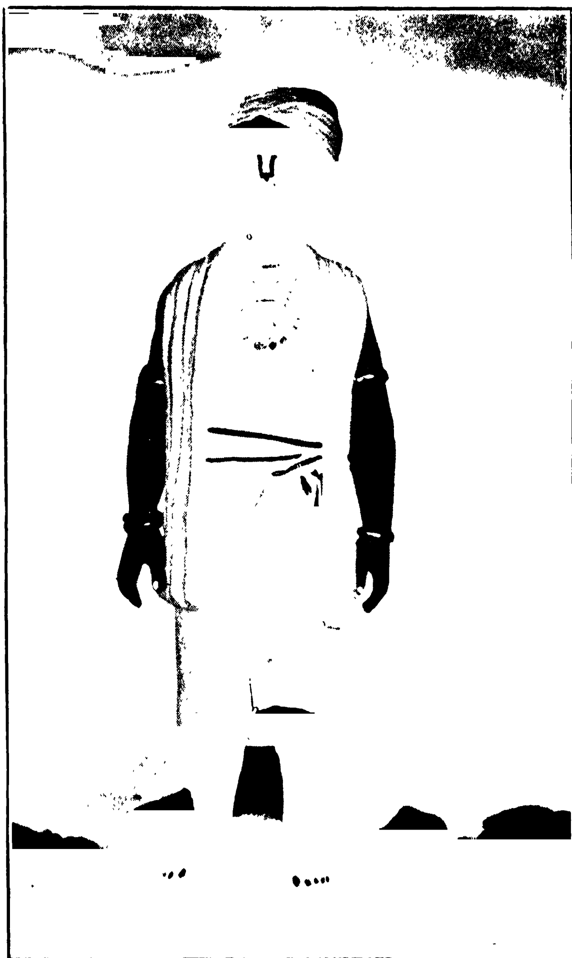
and began his preparation to fulfil the mission. He first commenced to write a commentary on the Brahmasutras as would embody the views of the qualified monistic school of thought, and then wrote the Vedantasara, Vedantasangraha and his commentary on the Gita. The writing of these works established his position as an Acharya and invested him with a certain sort of pontifical authority, and he then left on a tour, which extended as far as Kashmere. On his return, he was subjected to persecution by the then Chola Prince Kulottunga I about 1098 A.D. who wanted him to renounce his Vaishnavism in favour of Civaism ; and Ramanuja had therefore to seek refuge in the territory of the Hoya Sala Yadava Prince, who reigned in Mysore and whose capital was at Dvarsamudra. There Ramanuja succeeded in converting Bitti Deva, who was then carving out a kingdom for himself on the borders of the Chalukya kingdom. This event took place about the year 1098 A.D. After the death of the Chola King, Ramanuja returned to Sri Rangam and in his tour through southern India, he established his influence by organising and popularising the teachings of the Visistadvait doctrine, of which he was now the acknowledged fountain. He now felt that his end was near, and after making arrangements for the succession, he is said to have died at a very old age, probably about the year 1137 A.D.

The term Visistadvait is so called because it includes the oneness of God with attributes—Chit the individual soul and Achit matter. These attributes according to Ramanuja are real and permanent, but subject to the control of God. Before creation the body of the supreme soul exists in a subtle form. When creation takes place, it develops in the form of existing world as a result of positive volitional effort on the part of Brahma. The ethical justification for creation is justice—the bestowing of the fruits of Karma (Action) equally and impartially, and this is done by endowing souls with appropriate bodies of various kinds and giving room for further functioning and display of free-will within limits ; further evolution depending on the manner in which the individual uses his opportunity. Release is possible only through the true knowledge of God, which rests on the study of the scriptures, and depends upon constant devotions to Him and meditation of Him. The released soul enters heaven and enjoys in the presence of His Master. Brahm is only another name for Vishnu or Narayan. God is all pervading, all powerful, all knowing, all merciful ; his nature is fundamentally

antagonistic to all evil, he is the resort of all. He appears in five different modes: (1) Para—the highest, in which mode he appears as Narayan. (2) Vyuha, where he assumes four forms out of tenderness for his devotee. They are the rulers of the individual souls: (3) Vibhava consists of Incarnations, which according to Ramanuja God assumed in his infinite mercy without putting away his own essential God-like nature not only to relieve the burden of the earth, but to be accessible to men revealing to the world and to be seen by all, and doing such marvellous deeds as to ravish all beings. (4) Antaryamin, such as he dwells in the heart and accompanies the soul in all his wanderings. (5) Images set up in houses by worshippers.

The modes of worship to be practised by the devotees of Vishnu are sixteen, out of these, eight are the same as related in Bhagvat Puran. The other eight are: (1) Imprinting the marks of Conch-shell the discus and other weapons of Hari on the person by the devotee. (2) The making of the vertical mark on the forehead, which consist of two lines made with gopichandan (white clay) and a connecting crossline at the bottom; in the middle a yellow line with turmeric powder or a red line. The figure made with the white lines is supposed to represent Vishnu's feet, whilst the red line in the centre is made in honour of Sri or Lakshmi. Besides the above, marks are imprinted on the person representing the weapons of the God made of wood or metal. Some of the extreme devotees go to the length of cicatrizing parts of their body with heated stamps—chiefly the discus and the conch. (3) Repeating mantras. (4) Drinking water in which the image is washed. (5) Partaking of the offerings. (6) Doing service to his devotee. (7) Observing fast on every eleventh day of the bright and dark half of the Lunar months. (8) Laying Tulsi leaves on the idol. Besides the above there is another mode of worshipping Vishnu according to this school, which is to throw yourself on an Acharya and submit to his guidance.

His principal work the Sri Bhasya was meant to provide a system of philosophy for the school of which he was the head. Its writing enhanced the dignity of the sect, and was the forerunner of similar works produced during the following centuries by successive Acharyas. His adherence to the Vedanta imprinted on it the stamp of orthodoxy, which he followed in all his teachings, departing from the orthodox view in his attempts to teach the Sudras and others



Follower of Sri Ramanujacharya (Laity).



Follower of Sri Madhvacharya.

the doctrine of Vishnu Bhakti, wherein he closely followed the Alvars. The Satanis furnish an instance, whom he taught and connected with his system a people of the Sudra caste. The Satanis are employed as menials in Sri Vaishnava temples.

The spread of Vaishnavism after Ramanuja was continued by his successors, the most prominent among them being Sri Vedanta Deshika (1268-1369). He was a prolific writer and his works exceed a hundred in number in Sanskrit and Tamil. All this time the works of Ramanuja and other writers had become the object of deep study and careful scrutiny by the learned men of the time with the result that it brought about differences of opinion among the different scholars. A schism arose, and this brought about a division among the followers ; the main two divisions being the Vadgalai (the Northern School) and the Tengalais (the Southern School). In the beginning, the main difference between the two sects referred only on the interpretation of the condition of Prapatti, but later on differences in doctrines and practice cropped up and became very acute. The former was established by Sri Vedanta Deshika, accepting the authority of the Prabhandas and the Sanskrit traditions, whereas the Southern School attach more importance to the Prabhandas and are indifferent to Sanskrit tradition. At present the main outward distinction between the two is the difference in the marks they make. The Vadgalais make a parabolic form, the base of which is nearly in a line with the brows ; whereas the Tengalais use a somewhat straight mark slanting in opposite directions outward and supported on a base, which is itself a small triangle, base upwards with the vertex lower down about the apex or in some cases the centre of the nose. The centre streak is common to both and is made in honour of Sri or Lakshmi.

The followers of Ramanuja are found in large numbers in Southern India, and though in the beginning their number was principally confined to the Brahmins, later on when differences arose, the tenets were made more liberal and the sect embraced all classes.

Sri Madvacharya.

What was principally aimed at by the Vaishnavite teachers from the eleventh century and onwards was to confute the theory of Maya propounded by Sri Sankaracharya, and instead to

establish the duality of the human and divine soul. Sri Ramanuja tried to effect this by his doctrine of Vasistha-Advaitism, and in doing so that he may not be in conflict with the theory in the Brahma-sutras, he maintained that God is the efficient and material cause of the world having in his body as his attributes; the soul, the individual souls, and the inanimate world. To this Madva raised the objection that this doctrine besides bringing in conflict the doctrine of identity of the universal soul with its attributes has the tendency to deprecate the independent majesty of God, and he therefore in opposition to the monism of Sri Sankara and the qualified monism of Sri Ramanuja set up a dualistic theory, which is known as the Dvait. According to him, the five eternal distinctions have to be taken for granted, namely, (1) God and the Individual Spirit, (2) God and the inanimate world, (3) the Individual spirit and the inanimate world, (4) the one individual spirit and another, (5) one in animate object and another.

Sri Madva known before initiation as Vasudev was the son of a Brahmin by the name of Madhygeha, who lived in the village of Pajaka near Udpi in south Kanara. He was born according to the now accepted date in the year 1199 A.D. He received his early education as befitting his birth, and on declaring his intention to become a sannyasi, he was duly initiated as an anchorite by Achyutaprekshakacharya. After his initiation he continued his studies further under this Guru, and after some time he came in conflict with the learned men of the time. He then started on a tour in the south, and visited Rameshwaram, Trivandrum and other places. He then returned to Udpi and thought of going to the Himalayas. Accompanied by some of his disciples, he proceeded thither and after visiting Badrikashrama, he returned travelling through the Kalinga country. In the Telugu country he entered into a hot discussion with Sobhanna Bhatt, a powerful Advaitin, and induced him to accept Vaishnavism as propounded in his Dvait system of philosophy. This success brought him more disciples. He built a large temple in honour of Sri Crsna at Udpi and appointed eight of his disciples to attend the service connected with the temple ; and these afterwards became the founders of the eight Maths established at Udpi. Again he went to the Himalayas and whilst returning he visited Benares and other places in Northern India, and passed Goa on his way back to Udpi. Here he

succeeded in seceding a large portion of the Saraswat Brahmins, who were then the followers of the Kaivalya Matha of the Smartha Sampradaya of the Civite faith. He is then said to have gone back to Badrikashrama and to have never returned.

According to the teaching of Sri Madva, God possesses innumerable and infinite qualities. His functions are eight, namely, creation, protection, destruction, controlling all things, giving knowledge, manifestation of himself, tying beings down to the world and redemption. He is different from the individual soul and the inanimate world. He is One only assuming different forms, and he is identically the same with his incarnations. Luxmi or Sri is equally concomitant with him, but under his control.

The individual souls are innumerable and are of three kinds, (1) fit for attaining final bliss, (2) always going through the round of existence, (3) fit for the condition of darkness. Creation begins, when the Supreme soul disturbs the equilibrium of Prakrati until the mundane egg is produced. Then taking the sentient and non-sentient things in his sides the Supreme soul enters the mundane egg, and creates Brahma, from whom ordinary creation takes place. Knowledge springs from God and is of two kinds : (1) leading to wordly existence and (2) leading to Moksha or final emancipation. The first is to be neglected as it is not true knowledge; whereas the second is to be sought after by the direct knowledge or perception of Hari by means of methods of service. These are (1) Vairagya, (2) equanimity, (3) acquaintance with the spiritual lore, (4) self-surrender, (5) attendance on a Guru, (6) acquisition of knowledge from a Guru, (7) reflection over what has been taught, (8) devotion, (9) love of God, (10) sympathy for those who are inferior provided they are good, love for equals and respect for superiors, (11) performing rites and ceremonies without desire, (12) avoidance of sinful acts, (13) resigning every act to Hari, (14) knowledge of comparative position of beings and of Vishnu as the Highest, (15) knowledge of the five distinctions above mentioned, (16) distinguishing Prakrati from Purusha, (17) reprobation of false doctrines and (18) Upasana or worship. Among the various modes of worship recommended by him is Ankana—marking the body with the emblems of Vishnu with gopichandan. Occasionally these emblems are impressed with heated metallic stamps on the body so as to leave permanent scars. The frontal mark of the followers of Sri Madhva consists

of two white perpendicular lines made with gopichandan and a dark line in the middle with a red spot in the centre. The two white lines are joined at the base on the bridge of the nose.

Members of the sect exist in large numbers in Kanara, Mysore, and on the western coast from Goa to South Kanara and also are to be met with in Bombay, Benares and other places.

About the middle of the thirteenth century when Sri Madhva is supposed to have closed his earthly career, we find Vaishnavism flourishing in the extreme south and gaining many adherents. It received a very powerful impetus during the time of the Vizianagar kings, the establishment of whose kingdom dates from about the year 1336. Excepting the first dynasty of kings, who ruled Vizianagar and who were worshippers of Civa, succeeding dynasties adopted Vaishnavism as their religion. Raja Narshiva was a staunch Vaishnavite and was succeeded by one of his sons, Krishnadevraya (1509-1530) "an absolute sovereign, of extensive power and strong personal influence." His contributions to the faith consists in the erection of (1) a temple of Crshnaswami, which he built in 1513 dedicated to the worship of the image of Crsna which he captured from a temple in the hill fortress of Udayagiri in the Nellore district; (2) of a temple erected in honour of Hazara Ramaswami built in the same year and this is considered to be a perfect specimen of Hindu Temple Architecture of the Vizianagar period in existence. From its close proximity to the palace, it is surmised that this was a private place of worship of the king ; (3) he caused to be constructed an enormous statue of the God Vishnu in his Narshiva-avatar out of one boulder of granite near the Crsna temple and bestowed grants of land for its maintenance; (4) he commenced the construction of the great Vithal swami temple in honour of the God Vithoba at Pandharpur and (5) the Anantsayana temple or the God Vishnu lying in his recumbent position on the Shesha. It is worthy of note that the erection of a temple in honour of the God at Pandharpur may be considered as an introduction of the cult into the Karnatic from Maharastra, where it originated and developed. His successor Achutyraya being also a Vaishnavite built temples in honour of Vishnu adoring him in his incarnation of Varaha and Rama. Achutyraya died in the year 1541, and with him departed all the glory of the Vizianagar kingdom ; for soon after in the year 1565 was fought the battle of Talikota, when the kingdom was

destroyed by the Mahamadans. It may be remarked in connection with the history of the Vizianagar kingdom that apart from what is achieved in the political arena, it gave to Hinduism the form, which it has come down to us in our time in South India.

Further northwards across the Tungabhadra and in the country known as Maharastra, the Vaishnava faith was progressing under a different complexion. Here no Acharyas appeared as in the south to stimulate the minds of the people with abstruse reasoning and dialectics, and no stable monarchy to extend its patronage as the country was then suffering from a state of political unrest, which had been brought about by the inrush of the Mahamadans from the north under the famous general Malik Kaffur in the year 1310. Still like the silver lining to the darkest cloud " a movement for the propagation of the faith came into being and its growth fostered by a galaxy of saints and prophets, who greatly contributed to the upheaval of the national religion of the land". The movement is better known as the Pandharpur Movement which centred round Sri Vithal the chief deity at Pandharpur on the banks of the river Bhima, and which gave rise to a sect which is connected with the name of Pundalik, traditionally supposed to have been the originator of Sri Vithal cult. Nothing authentic is known about Pundalik but the sect appears to have existed from even before the thirteenth century of the Christian era and had attracted a large portion of the population of Maharastra. Amongst these a special mention is made of certain Varkarees who derive their name from Vari-Kari, that is, one who has vowed to make an annual pilgrimage to the shrine of Vithoba at Pandharpur on the 11th day of the months of Ashad and Kartik, and who wear a necklace of beads of the Tulsi wood, who accept the authority of the Gita as commented upon by Dnyandev, who lived in the thirteenth century of the Christian era, and of the Bhagvat as expounded by Eknath. The Vedic or the Brahmanic religion had begun at the time to lose its hold on the popular mind because of the progress of the Jainas and on account of the inability of the people to understand the religious literature which was uptil then written in Sanskrit. To oppose the tendency, and to counteract the influence of the Jains, Dnyandev turned his attention to and felt like others in a later age the necessity of preaching and writing in the spoken language of the people, and the result of his efforts was the composition of a commentary on the

Gita in Marathi, which contains his philosophical teaching for the followers of his sect. His further efforts were directed towards unifying his followers and consolidating and furthering the cult of Sri Vithal and in these he found many collaborators, men like Nivriti, Sopan, Namdev, Savta, Visoba, Gora, and Bai Muktabai leading a pious and saintly life and working for the up-lifting and amelioration of the masses of the country. A very interesting feature of this movement was the introduction of Kirtans and Bhajans—singing specially composed songs in the form of Abhangs and Oovees in honour of their chosen deity. The movement received additional support from Eknath, who was a prolific writer in verse and the author of a commentary on the Bhagvat written specially with the object of bringing home to the people the tenets of the Bhakti faith and to provide them with a literature more accessible and easily understood than the commentary on the Gita which the people found more difficult to grasp because of the lofty and speculative character of the composition. Later on towards the end of the sixteenth century the sect found a staunch supporter in the person of Tukaram. He was born at Dehu on the banks of the Indrayani 14 miles north-east of Poona about the year 1608 A.D. He was the son of a grocer. He was early introduced into the profession of his father. Unfortunately for him the father died at a very early age of his life and Tukaram feeling unable to bear the burden of his family and feeling disgusted with the ways of the world openly showed his dislike for both and took up the life of a Virakta (one giving up family life and devoting himself solely to the service of God) and began his preaching centring all his devotion on Sri Vithal, and composed several Abhangs in honour of the deity, which embody to the fullest extent the pure teaching of the doctrine of what is known as the Pandharpur Movement. Tukaram was held in much esteem and veneration by Sivaji who was constantly in touch with him. He died in the year 1649 A.D. In the words of the late Mr. Justice Ranade, Tukaram and others of his kind were men who led holy and austere lives, and their worship of Sri Crsna as Vithoba was eminently pure and chaste. They conceived God as a kind of a loving parent, and as a consequence of this conception of God's relation to man the supreme efficacy of devotional love (Bhakti) in preference to other methods of attaining his knowledge became the cardinal creed of this Vaishnava sect. There is not a saint who in his lifetime preached that Bhakti and Faith are



Saint and Poet Sri Dnyaneshwar, 13th century.
Consolidated the Varkari sect.



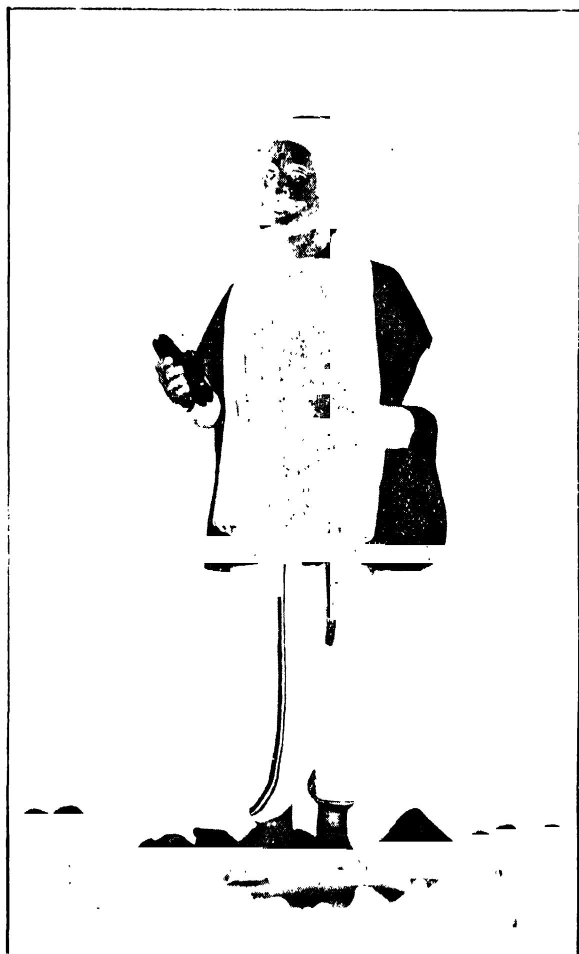
Saint Tukaram 1608-1649 A.D.



Follower of the Saints of Maharastra in the 16th century called Varkari.



Saint Ramdas, 1608-1681 A D



Follower of Saint Ramdas.



Follower of the Saints of Maharastra called Maratha Gosawee.

far superior in value to all other forms of worship such as performance of rites and ceremonies, pilgrimages, ablutions, self-mortifications, learning and contemplation. Their lives teem with instances of meek and suffering men who placed their trust in Providence. These toiled hard and persistently to change the popular mind and by their teaching mostly through the vernaculars and the practice of their lives, they succeeded in their efforts to elevate the national conception of man's spiritual nature and shake the hold of caste intolerance. They made the nation more humane, and prone to hold together and ultimately succeeded in raising the nation to a higher level of capacity both of thought and action. In course of time the Pandharpur tenets were promulgated from the Bhima to the Tapti, and men who visited the shrine became more closely drawn together by their knowledge which they received through the means of the common language.

The Varkarees wear the usual Vaishnava marks, and carry an orange-brown banner in token of the pilgrimages they have made to the shrine at Pandharpur, to Alandi where Dnyandev lies buried in his Samadh, and to Dehu a place connected with the birth and life history of Tukaram.

A sect not differing much in its philosophical teaching but bearing a somewhat quasi political character was established by Ramdas, whose main object was to ennoble the lives of the people by laying emphasis on the observance of right conduct and action, and who combined with his teaching the doctrine of political emancipation of the Hindus from the thraldom of the Mahamadans. He recommended caution and the necessity for man to work ceaselessly without caring for any material good or comforts. His followers known as Ramdasees were very numerous in his time, but the sect degenerated since then, and at present we see its members adopting a purely mendicant life.

Narayan Suryaji Thosar *alias* Saint Ramdas was born in the year 1608 and from his early years showed a taste for religion. Alike Tukaram he was in constant touch with Sivaji, who looked on him as his Guru. He frequently addressed him on the art of government laying down rules of conduct for him to follow. He died in 1681. His most important work is Dasbodh. He established the Ramdasi Sampradaya.

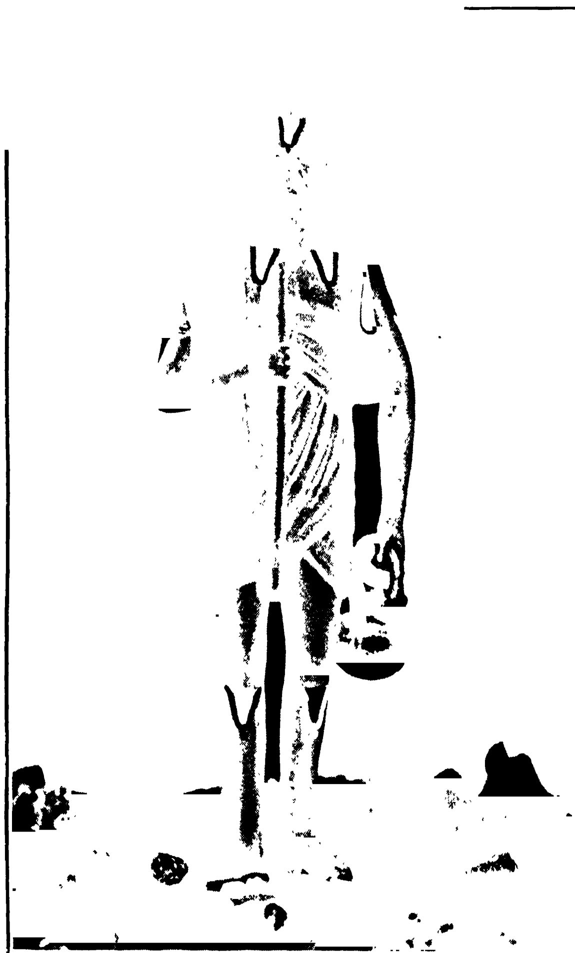
The main difference between the Vaishnavism of the Tamil and the Maratha countries lay in that the former interested more the Brahmins as its doctrines were taught through the medium of the classical language, that it advocated the practice of rites and ceremonies, making it at the same time subservient to Bhakti or Faith; whereas the latter appealed more to the religious instincts and possessed a clear spiritual insight and its doctrines were easily made accessible to all classes alike through the use of the common dialect. It is in this latter phase that Vaishnavism was taken back again to the north across the Vindhyas, and this work was done by a few of the Vishnava reformers chief among whom was Ramananda.

Ramananda.

Ramananda was born about the year 1400 A.D. He was probably an ascetic, who went to Benares about the year 1430, carrying away his doctrine of Ramite cult, and his efforts seem to have been crowned with greater success. He adopted more the philosophical teachings of Ramanuja, but in practice he was more liberal and tolerant and freely addressed to all classes. Thus we have a number of people belonging to the lowest classes counted amongst his followers. With some of his disciples he went from place to place, and converted men to his views. He is stated to have died about the year 1470. The chief innovations introduced by Ramananda were (1) he made no distinction between the members of the different castes but addressed himself to all alike, (2) he made use of the vernacular as the medium of instruction, and (3) he introduced the worship of Rama and Sita.

The Ramanandees are by far the largest in India, especially in the Gangetic delta, their chief monasteries being in Benares and Auyodhya. They have a frontal mark on their forehead, which resembles the one made by the followers of Ramanuja with this difference that the two outer lines are continued down to the nose ending in a loop, which they say represents the throne of the deity. The two white lines are made in honour of Rama and his brother Lakshman whereas the centre red is made in honour of Sita.

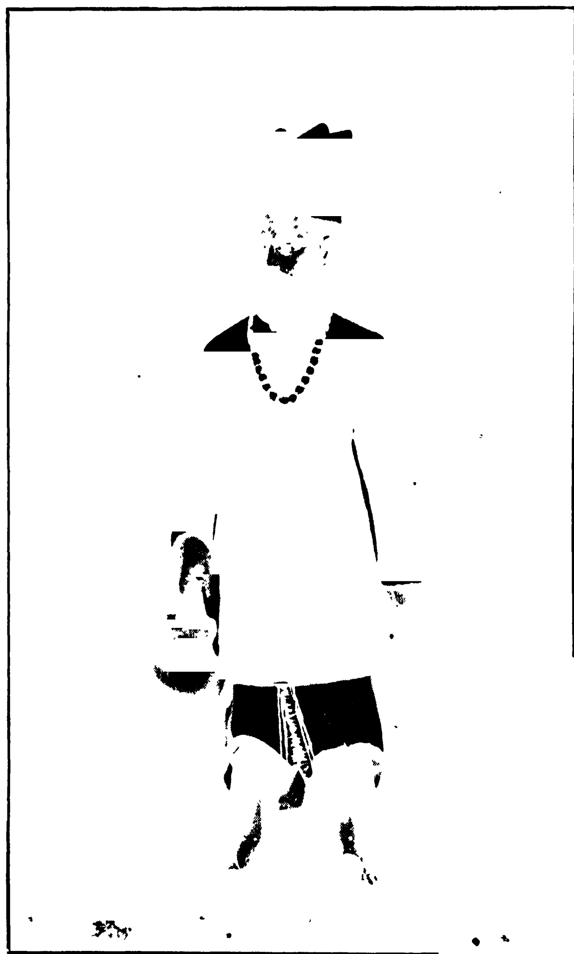
The worship of Rama introduced by Ramananda, was spread further by the composition in Hindi of the Ramayana by the celebrated poet Tulsidas (1532-1623.) He was the greatest man of the times, even greater than the name of the Emperor (Akbar) in whose



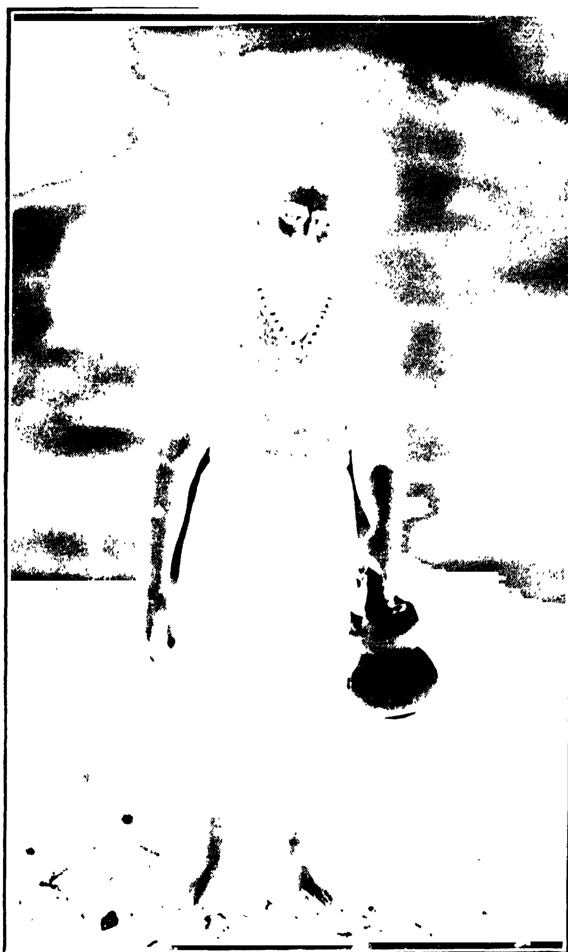
Follower of Sri Ramananda called Bairagee.



Follower of Sri Kabir Saheb.



Follower of Dadu called Dadupanthi.



Ramsnehi.



Satnami.



Bairagee called Naga—one of the sub-sects of the Dadupanthees.

time he lived inasmuch as the conquest of heart and mind of millions of men and women effected by his work, was an achievement infinitely more lasting and important than any or all the conquests of the Emperor put together. He enjoyed no advantages of birth, fortune or education being exposed by his parents to die on a roadside, as it was considered that he came out into the world at a very unpropitious hour. But Providence willed it the other way, as he was picked up by a wandering mendicant. He brought him up and instructed him in the legendary lore of Rama. In company with his adoptive parent, he wandered about, at last settling at Benares, where he composed his bulky poem "Lake of the Deeds of Rama", which occupied the foremost place in Hindi literature. After the death of Ramananda his work was taken up by one of his famous disciple Kabir; and the panth or sect he founded is named after him.

Kabir lived about the beginning of the fifteenth century. He became the disciple of Ramananda and in his lifetime, he condemned caste distinction, the rites, ceremonies and other practices of the Brahmins and gave a code of moral teaching to his followers. His chief work consists in bringing the Hindus and the Mahamadans closer together. His mode of worship consists only in prayer and praise of God. The sect he founded is one of the most important in Northern India and the chief seat is at Benares with branches at other places. Kabir prohibited the use of sect marks, but later on some of his followers began using the Vaishnava marks—the frontal mark being called the Tika. Even Kabir's portrait is now shown with the Tika on the forehead.

The influence of Kabir was more recognised by the following sects founded after him.

The Dadupanthis founded by Dadu, a cotton-cleaner, who lived about the beginning of the fifteenth century; the Babalalees founded by Babalal of Malwa, a sect which attracted the attention of Prince Dara Sheko; the Satnamis, at first routed by Aurengzeb, but subsequently reorganised by Jugjivandas about the middle of the seventeenth century and further developed by Ghasidas; the Malukdasis founded by Baba Malukdas in 1574 A.D.; the Sivanarayanees founded by Siva Narayan about 1734; the Ram-Snehiees and others. These are found mostly in Rajputana and their mode of worship consists in singing and teaching. These sects have now

degenerated into merely an order of sadhus. All these expressed their teaching in verse and appealed mostly in the wake of Kabir to out-castes and others almost not within the pale of Hinduism proper. Originally being under the influence of Islam, these gave up Hindu worship, but subsequently having no better substitute for it, their recitation of verses and singing of hymns was no sufficient attraction for the majority of the followers, who have now degenerated under the influence of other existing and more flourishing sects into mere Guru-worship or worship of books.

Sub-Sects of Ramanandis.

The Khakis who lead an erratic life are generally confounded with Vairagees. They apply clay and ashes to their person, wear the Jata or the matted hair closely imitating the Vairagees of the Civite sect.

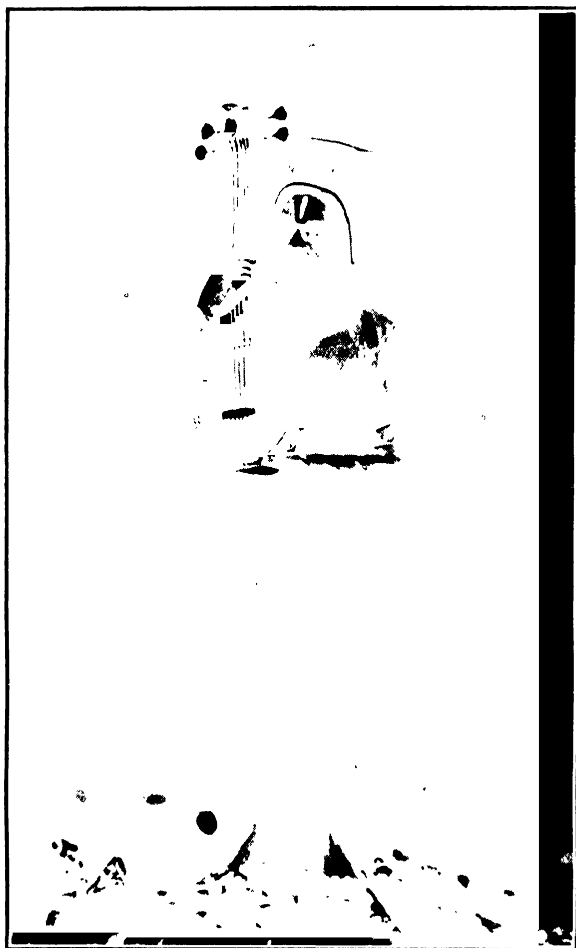
The Bendiwales are the followers of a founder, who began by putting a red dot on his forehead between the two white ones in place of the red line made by the followers of Ramananda. On being questioned about the reason for the change, he is stated to have said that he did it out of difference to the wishes of Janki, consort of Rama, and as a test he went and bathed in the Surya river and rubbed his forehead with water, when the whole of the mark except the dot was washed away. These form the sub-sects of Ramanandis.

The Rohidasees and the Senapanthis are two other sects founded respectively by Rohidas—a chamar and Sena—a barber; a circumstance showing how Vaishnavism as propagated by Ramananda had reached the lowest of the Hindu castes.

The term Gosavi, Vairagee, etc., are so vaguely employed that it is necessary to explain its various significations and also to show in what sense, it furnishes the name to a distinct class. Commonly any devotee is called a Gosavi, whether he is celibate or not, whether he roams about or has a settled habitations or whether he idles himself or follows any particular vocation. The essential thing is that he leads a sort of religious life, and wears a distinctive mark in honour of the deity he worships. The Vairagees on the other hand are persons who have completely estranged themselves from the world. These are peculiar with the Ramanandi sect and the followers of Kabir and other followers. These lead mostly a mendicant life and among these may occasionally be seen a figure with a tinsel



Bendiwal.



Follower of Sri Ramananda called Gosawee

crown worn over a skull cap and carrying a bamboo covered with red cloth thrown across the shoulders. A basket is slung at each end of the pole, in which a pot is placed containing water from the Ganges which he has vowed to take to Dwarka or Jaggannath or the far distant Rameshwar. Such class of Vairagees are known as Sitapanthi Vairagees.

The Radha Crsna Cult.

The Radha *cum* Crsna cult bases itself chiefly on Vaishnava devotion which has used one of the most intimate human relations, namely intense love as symbol of the relation between God and man; and is founded on the story of the youth of Sri Crsna's life which he spent mostly in Vrindavan in the company of young cow-keepers attending their cattle and delighting in sylvan sports. The Harivansa, the Bhagvata and other later Puranas which purport to give the history of these early years of his life contain stories abounding in miracles, and written in the most extravagant style. But when divested of all the imagery and poetic fiction, they reveal Sri Crsna as a man who worked most for the amelioration of the people and for the establishment of the right in place of the wrong. No wonder then, whilst young, when he showed signs of his future greatness, he was greatly beloved of those with whom he came in close contact. The friends of his youth continued to be the friends of his age, and the fond memories of his early years came to be nourished among the people at Vrindavan when he had left it, and later on, after his deification these memories came to be looked upon as a priceless treasure for bards and poets to draw their inspiration from.

The story of Radha's love towards Crsna symbolising the relation of man and God is one of the many of such examples of poetic inspiration the earliest traces of which are to be found in a Samhita called Jnyanamritasara contained in Naradapancharatra. Later on the legend was transformed into the ideal of Bhakti best represented in the passionate devotion which Radha (a milkmaid of Vraj) is depicted to have cherished for Crsna. The idea seems to have its birth in the story referred to in the Bhagvata Puran, where she is referred to as being alone in company of her lord typifying abandonment of her family, deserting her home to follow the flute of Crsna, which is the call of the Infinite—the command to leave all worldly pleasures and "follow me". Her companions

too have followed suit and Sri Crsna received them because they abandoned all regards for the world, their lands and children the greatest sacrifice that one could make. This seems to be the ideal which Vishnu Swami and Nimbaraka placed before their followers when they lent their support to the creed.

Vishnu Swami, a man from the south settled at Vrindavan, was the first Acharya of the sect that had now grown up of itself. In his teaching he followed Sri Madhva, and offered worship conjointly to Radha and Crsna. He lived at the close of the twelfth century. He was followed by Nimbaraka also a Telugu Brahmin and a scholarly man. When he settled at Vrindavan he found that the new phase in which Vaishnavism had grown had found favour with the people and he therefore lent his additional support to establish it on firmer grounds. He followed in his teachings Sri Ramanuja giving preference to the doctrine of self-surrender. The sect he founded is known as Sanaka Sampradaya, and has a large following near Mathura and in Bengal. The frontal mark consists of two white lines with a black spot in the centre. The two chief centres are Salimabad (south of Ajmere) and Vrindavan.

Before proceeding to notice the further development of this form of worship, we shall briefly allude to a cult, which consisted in offering worship to Sri Crsna as a young boy—as Bala Gopala. The first great expounder of this form of worship was Sri Vallabhacharya. This, it appears, had come into existence at an earlier period before Nimbaraka came on the field, and according to the opinion of some writers contributed more to pave the way for the propagation of the Radha Crsna form.

Vallabha was the son of a Telugu Brahmin, and was born in the year 1479 A.D. He lived for some time at Vrindavan and at Mathura, and tradition states that he was a student of Vishnu Swami. He is then stated to have travelled throughout India as a pilgrim and finally to have come back to Vrindavan, where in a dream Crsna as Gopal—Crsna manifested himself to him and commanded him to come to Govardhan Hill. Vallabha went to the hill and there he received the command to erect a shrine and promulgate the special form of worship. According to Vallabha's theory, the whole creation sprung from God like sparks from the burning fire. Sri Crsna is the highest Brahma and he is called Purshottama—the excellent of all beings, and Purnananda—the highest joy. The way to reach him is by



Follower of Sri Ramananda called Sitapanthee Bairagee.



Follower of Sri Vallabhacharya.

Pustimarga or Pusti Bhakti, that is, Bhakti by the grace of God which is of four kinds: (1) Pravaha Pusti Bhakti is the way of those who though engaged in worldly affairs do acts calculated to gain knowledge of God, (2) Maryada Pusti Bhakti is the way of those who withdrawing from worldly affairs, devote themselves to the service of God, (3) Pusti Pusti Bhakti is the way of those who already enjoying God's grace, are made by further grace to acquire knowledge by their own effort and (4) Shradha Pusti Bhakti is the path of those who through mere love of God devote themselves to singing his praise. Practice of anyone of these four by further stages of development completely identifies the devotee with Hari, the final fruit of which consists in the admission of the devotee to the eternal heavenly abode. The followers of this sect are mostly the trading classes of Gujarat, Rajputana and further north about Mathura and they are distinguished by a red perpendicular mark on their forehead meeting in a semi-circle at the root of the nose with a red dot in the centre. The great authority of the sect is the Bhagvata as explained by Sri Vallabhacharya, who is also the author of other Sanskrit works.

The Sanaka Sampradaya.

About the same time as Sri Vallabha, there appeared in Bengal another propagator of the creed of Radha and Crsna, known by the name of Chaitanya. He developed more the emotional side in preference to the ceremonial, which had been emphasised before by Sri Vallabha.

Chaitanya was born in the year 1485 A.D. and was the son of one Jagannath Misra who emigrated to Nadya in Bengal from Sylhet. He had an elder brother named Nityananda. Having received his Diksha from Isvara Puri, a Madhva Sannyasi, he began taking pupils and giving them secular instruction. He then began going from place to place and collecting money by begging and singing in praise of God. Whilst in his peregrinations, his first wife died, but when be returned, he married a second time. In his teachings, he condemned ritualistic system of the Brahmins, but preached faith in Hari and the love of him as well as singing his name as the effectual ways to salvation. He then cultivated more the emotional side of the popular mind. He also preached the doctrine of the brotherhood of man, and denounced caste distinction, so much so that he admitted even Mahamadans into his fold. In his preaching,

he was assisted by his brother Nityananda and Advaitananda his former Guru, but later on turned into a disciple. The chief feature of Chaitanya's preaching was the institution of Kirtana or fervant singing of songs on devotional matters. About the year 1510, he became a Sannyasi, and then he visited the shrine of Jaggannath at Puri. He then wandered from place to place, visiting Benares and other places until he finally returned to Puri and died in the year 1533,

The principal doctrines of Chaitanya are that Crsna is Supreme and is so beautiful that he excites love. His power pervades the universe. He possesses self-multiplying power with which he keeps on sporting eternally. His chief power consists in creating joy or the power of love, and when this becomes settled in the heart of the devotee, it constitutes the best feeling. Crsna is to be attained by Bhakti alone.

Chaitanya with his two disciples, Nityananda and Advaitananda, are called the three Prabhus of the sect. The descendants of the two latter are the spiritual heads of the sect. There are temples of the Chaitanya sect at Mathura, Vrindavan, and in Bengal.

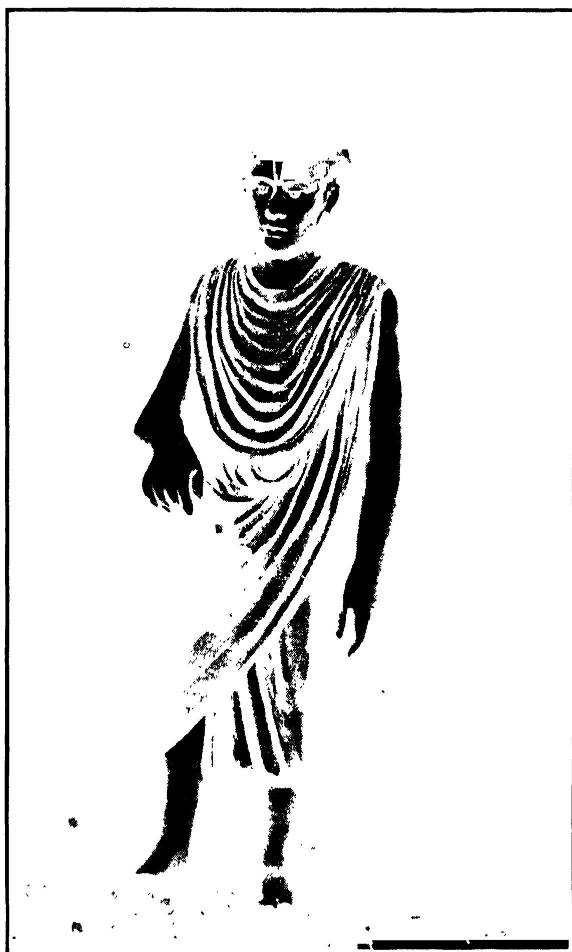
The sectarian mark worn by his followers consists of two white perpendicular lines joined together at the bridge of the nose and a line continued upto the tip of the nose.

In later times, the worship of Guru or spiritual heads as gods, came in vogue, so much so that there are now hundreds of temples in Orissa, where Chaitanya's image is daily worshipped. Chaitanya himself does not appear to have left any writings behind him.

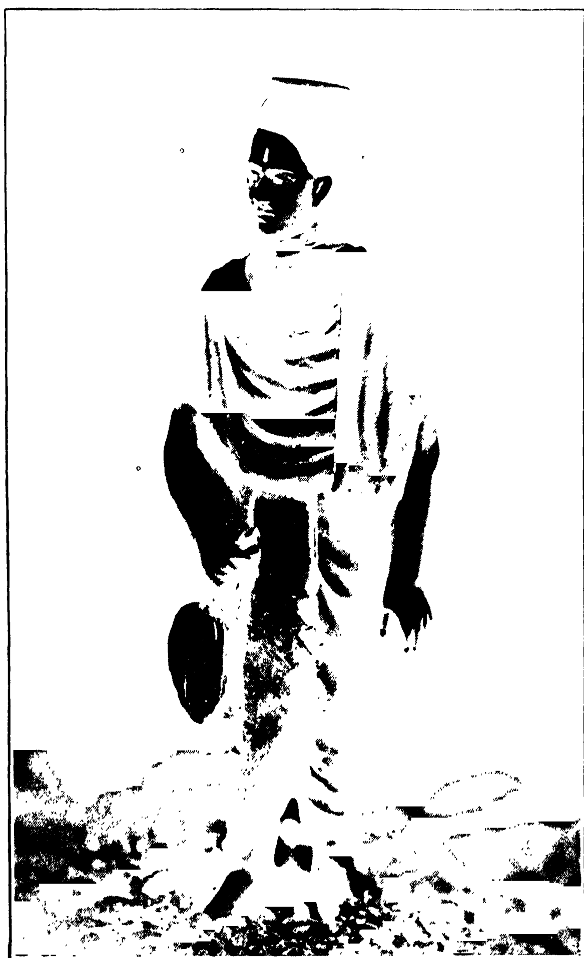
In course of time differences arose, and the following divisions may be regarded as the seceders from the principal body, the Shastha Dayakas, the Karta Bhajas, and the Sahujas. These are of minor importance.

The introduction of the worship of Radha and Crsna unhappily received a curious turn chiefly due to certain writings of an erotic type and gave rise to sets, whose practices can never be looked upon with favour. These are : The Radha-Vallabhees supposed to be the followers of Hari Vansa, who lived at Vrandavan about the end of the sixteenth century. These adore more the name of Radha and look to her more for special favours to be obtained in Heaven.

The sect mark of the Radha-Vallabhees is made in the form of a loop, the round portion below meeting near the eye-brows.



Follower of Sri Chaitanya.



Follower of Swami Narayen.

The Saki-Bhavas is another sect, which has probably sprung from the last. Herein the followers devote themselves preferentially to Radha being taught to look upon themselves as sakhis or the female companions of Radha. These carried themselves to further excesses in assuming the female dress and wearing female ornaments.

These excesses were bound to re-act and we have in the two following sects, distinct efforts made towards purifying the creed.

The Charana Dasis founded by Charandas, who resided at Delhi in the reign of Alumgir II. They are more or less the followers of the Vedantists in their philosophical doctrines, they attach importance to morality, and they enjoin upon their followers to discharge the duties of their profession or caste, to associate with pious men, to put faith in the preacher and to adore Hari. The mendicants of this order are distinguished by wearing yellow garments, and a single streak of gopichandan on the forehead. They wear a small pointed cap round the lower part of which they wrap a yellow turban. The authorities for the sect are the Bhagvat and Gita—parts of which are said to be translated by Charan Das himself. The chief seat of Charan Dasis is at Delhi, and they have some establishments in the Punjab.

The Swami Narayan sect is another of the class referred to. Swami Narayan, at first called Sahajanand, was a Brahmin of Rohilkhand. He lived about the beginning of the nineteenth century. He placed himself under the teaching of one Ramanand Swami, whilst at Junager, and then went to Ahmedabad where he attracted some following. From here he was driven to Jetalpur, south of Ahmedabad, where he was imprisoned by the Officials of the Gaikawar on a pretence of the collision between his followers and other Hindus. He was after some time set at liberty ; when he went to Wartal in the Kaira District, where he built some temples and convents getting money for the same by his popularity which he had secured by this time. The religion of Swami Narayan is a mixture of Lakshmi and Radha worship with Sri Crsna as Ranchod—a form in which the god was popularly worshipped at that time. In the beginning the sect met with a great opposition from the followers of Vallabha, but his admission of lower castes in the fold has greatly increased the number of adherents. The forehead mark of the followers of Swami Narayan is like the letter "U" with a circular spot in the

centre. The mendicants wear a salmond coloured dress with two rosaries in honour of Radha and Crsna.

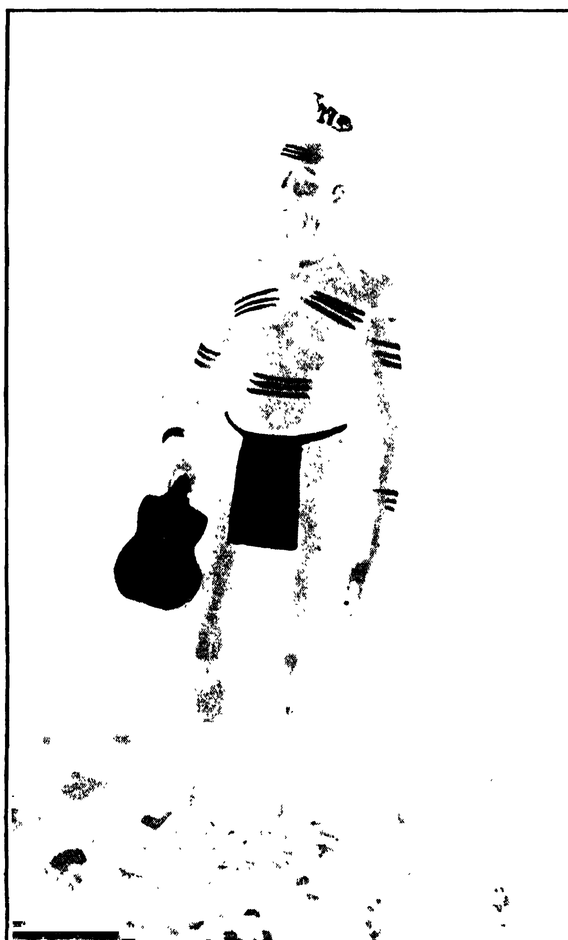
According to Bhakta Mala " Garland of Vaishnavite Saints " written by Nabhaji, who lived in the latter half of the sixteenth century, a true Vaishnavite is thus described: " He, who bears the Tulsi beads or Lotus seeds round his neck, has the conch and discus impressed upon his person, and the upright streak along the centre of his forehead is verily a worshipper of Vishnu ". The above description is given in accordance with the ritual laid down for the use of the sect marks and stamps in the Panchratra Samhitas. Different dates have been suggested as to their adoption in different parts of the country; but it is now generally accepted that the Samhitas were composed some time before 800 A.D. during the time of the Guptas, and were compiled mostly in the north and carried in course of time southwards to the country of the Tamils. Their importance lies in the fact that in them may be traced the origin of the Sakta principles, and secondly they form the manual to express the beliefs and practices of the Vaishna people. Not only the Samhitas ordered, the worshipper of Vishnu to paint the sectarian mark and impress his emblems, but also to cause the latter to be branded on his person with the object that the body may always bear the mark by means of the scar, which the branding operation leaves behind. The Sri Ramanujas and Sri Madhvas resort to this practice. The upright streak along the centre of the forehead is the only outward manifestation of the faith of the wearer. It is generally made in the shape of the letter "U" to represent the foot-mark of the divinity; and is made in sandalwood paste or gopichandan, (a sort of white clay obtained near Dwarka). It is known as Urdhvapundra. This was commonly the mark used by all the Vaishnavites, such as the early Bhagvatas, and the Vaishnavas till the time when innovations were made by the different sect founders.

Sri Ramanuja introduced a streak made in red or yellow within the two outer lines of the Urdhvapundra in honour of Lakshmi or Sri, whose worship he advocated and which was introduced in accordance with the Sakta doctrine of Creation.

Sri Madhva ordained that instead of the red line introduced by Ramanuja, line in black should be made with charcoal from incense offered to Narayan terminating in a round mark made in red. Herein



Follower of Sri Nimbarak.



Worshipper of Civa carrying the Nandi on his head.

he was led more by the spirit of compromise which he made with the other sects as Sri Madhva did not prohibit the worship of Civa, Surya, Devi and Ganpati—a mixture of Vaishnavite and Civite deities along with Vishnu, but to Vishnu alone are all prayers and actions to be finally dedicated.

Sri Ramananda made no great change in the mark adopted by Sri Ramanuja but some of his disciples after him introduced more complicated devices such as the drawing of a Lotus or a Tulsi leaf to serve as the throne for the footprint of Vishnu to rest upon.

Sri Nimbarak, who was the follower of the Radha *cum* Crsna cult, introduced a black spot in the Urdhvapundra in honour of Radha. Sri Vallabha introduced a red spot in honour of Radha. Thus we see that the principal mark of the Vaishnavites representing the footprint of the deity remained unaltered, though changes were introduced, and the drawing made complicated according to the choice of the worshipper.

Besides the above, the Vaishnavas stamp the chief emblems of Vishnu, the Chakra, the Conch, the Gada and the Padma, on their person by means of stamps, wooden or metallic, representing these emblems. These are impressed, first being steeped in chandan or sandalwood paste or gopichandan. This practice it seems has been more generally adopted after it had received its approbation in the Puranas written to edify Vishnu worship. The Chakra which is taken as the symbol of the Sun-God with whom Vishnu was originally identified, is taken to light the path of the worshipper in this world of darkness. The conch is taken as a symbol to banish all fears and to proclaim victory ; for according to Vishnu Purana Sri Crsna after killing the sea-demon Panchyajyanna, removed the conch from his person and blew it loudly to announce his victory over the evil. The Gada is the emblem representing the Indian club with which Vishnu is said to have killed his enemies. The Padma or the Lotus is sacred to Sri or Lakshmi, as she is said to have sprung from it. The wearing of these insignia are thought to purify the body and the constant meditation of them to purify the mind.

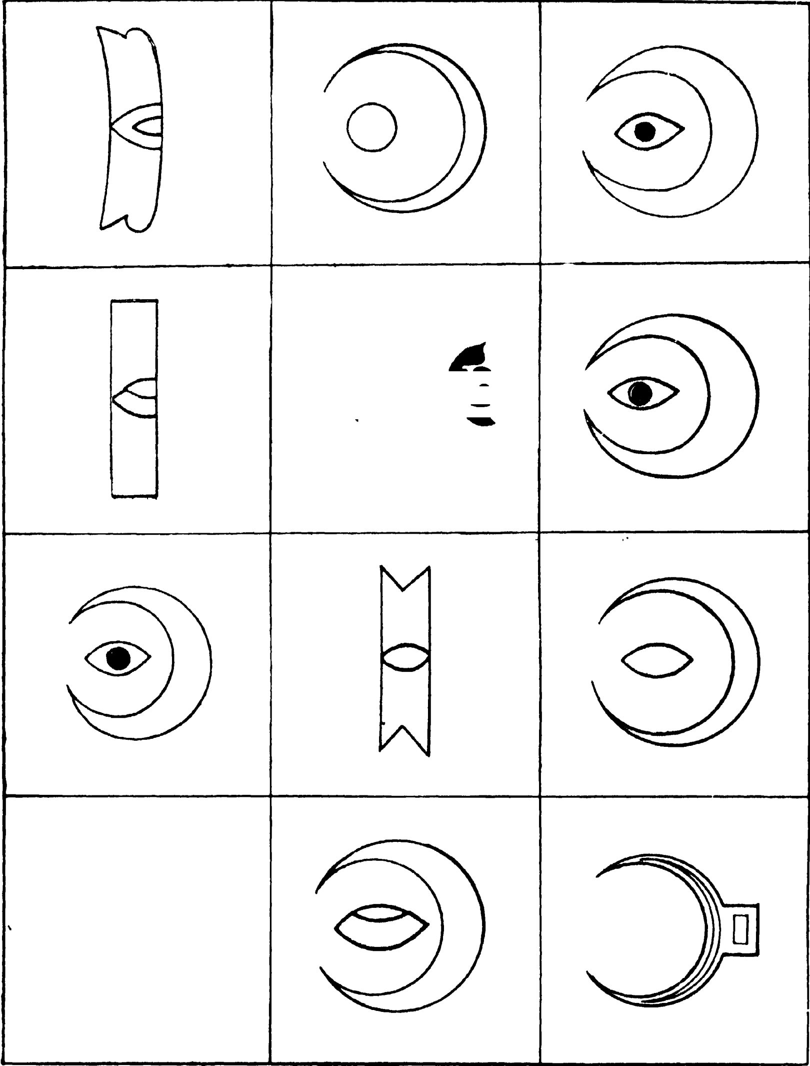
Civa and His Worshippers.

The worship of Civa is one of the oldest and most widely spread in India. In very early times his worshippers were divided into two main divisions (1) those who practised their rites according to

the Vedas and (2) those whose practices were opposed to them. In the dreadful and destructive phenomena of nature, and the epidemics that rage and carry away hundreds of men, the ancient Aryans saw the power of the Omnipotent which they named Rudra. The same power when appealed and appeased by prayers and offerings was turned into a benignant being and they named it Civa meaning the Auspicious. This was the natural process by which a belief in Rudra-Civa came to be established in India in early times. In the Rig Veda, Civa appears as an epithet of Rudra and the hymns addressed are sung more in honour of Rudra than that of Civa. Herein he is described as a malevolent deity and prayers are offered to appease his wrath. In the Yajur Veda the character of Civa becomes more developed. His benevolent nature is distinguished from the opposite, but possessing as he did the characteristics of Rudra he was supposed to dwell from the habitation of men far away in forests and came to be considered as the Lord of the forest dwellers. In the Atharvan Veda the conception is still further developed where from the terrible and destructive God, he was transformed into a benevolent deity. It was reserved later on to the Svetasvatara Upanishad to disentangle from their connection with the Impersonal Brahm those elevated notions about the nature of the God, and his relation to man and the world, and to transfer them to this God, who was then alone in the field, and the germs of Bhakti or Love were dedicated to him. Hence he came to be recognised as the Supreme God. This nomenclature of the God came down from the time of the Upanishad to the time when the Mahabharat was composed, when the characteristics of Civa or Mahadev as he then came to be addressed in direct and conscious imitation of New Vaishnavism, were that he was a powerful, wrathful and impetuous God, but could be easily appeased and was bountiful when propitiated. In this character of the Supreme Being he is represented as sitting enthroned in his heaven called Kailas with his consort Parvati and a host of Ganas, as his attendants.

The Puranas mention different personalities under which Civa is worshipped. (1) In his character as Creator, he is worshipped in the form of a phallic emblem—the Linga. The origin of Linga worship lies buried in obscurity, but it was found to prevail among the aboriginal tribes. From a reference to the Rig Veda, it appears that Linga worship was not prevalent among the early Aryans, but that it was practised at the time by the people who were considered

Sect marks used by the Civites



as enemies of the Aryans. Indra is prayed, for instance, not to allow those whose God is "Sisna", that is, the Linga to disturb the rites of the singers. Barring this reference and also the remote allusion to this form of worship in the Svetasvatara Upanishad, the first distinct mention of Linga worship appears in the Mahabharat. Hence we conclude that to the early Aryans the Linga worship was foreign, but later on when the Svetasvatara Upanishad was composed, it appears to have crept out from the aboriginal or barbaric classes into the fold of the ordinary people and from them gradually to have been accepted by the literate people by the time when the Epic was composed. It is in this final stage its adoption by the higher and learned classes, which marks the beginning of the Linga worship on a wider scale. This form of worship was prevalent on a very wide scale in India before the Christian era is proved by a recent find of two of the earliest known Lingas, one found at Bhita (now lodged in the Lucknow Museum) and the other at Gudimallam in the Madras Presidency, which are said to belong to the first century B.C. The iconoclastic zeal of the Muhammadan invaders is responsible for wiping out evidence of the extant of this form of worship prevalent in Northern India in very early times ; but the extant Puran, namely, the Kasi Khand composed about the sixth century A.D. and the writings of the great astronomer Varahamir, who died about the year 587 A.D. show beyond doubt that great attention was paid to this form of worship, and the greatest pains were taken to construct the Lingas correct even in their minutest details. The following twelve Lingas are said to be very ancient, and those that have escaped destruction are held in great veneration :—

(1) Somnath destroyed by Muhamad of Ghazni.
(2) Mallikarjun or Sri Saila in the district of Kurnool.
(3) Mahakal in Ujjain destroyed by Altamsh in 1235 A.D.
(4) Omkarnath on the bank of the Narmada.
(5) Amareshwar in Ujjain.
(6) Vaidyanath in Bengal (still extant).
(7) Rameshwar in South India (still extant).
(8) Bhimashankar at Dakini near Rajmahendri.
(9) Tryambakeswar near Nasik.
(10) Gautamesha original site and present fate unknown.
(11) Visveswar in Benares.
(12) Kedarnath in the Himalayas.

(2) In his character as a Destroyer, he is shown in his terrible aspect armed with the trident and wearing a necklace of skulls. He is identified with Death, and as such he is the leader of the mischievous spirits that frequent places of execution, cemeteries and places supposed to be the common place for meeting of goblins, and other mischievous spirits. He is Bhairava depicted as carrying weapons of destruction, wearing a girdle of serpents, laughing and dancing and playing upon the Dumru. In this character of Bhairava, he was the favourite deity of the Kapalikas and the Kalamukhs, who worshipped him with bloody sacrifice.

(3) In his character of a Yogi, he goes unclothed, his body is smeared with ashes and has his long hair plaited and gathered up in a knot. He is represented as having obtained the highest perfection in abstract meditation.

(4) In his character as Mahadev, he is represented as a beneficent God patronising literature, arts, drama, romance, etc. As such he is invoked by the early Sanskrit writers such as Panini, Kalidas and Bhavabhuti, and some of the best pieces of architecture are supposed to have been produced under his inspiration.

(5) In his character as Nataraja, he is shown dancing in ecstasy to the accompaniment of sweet music and dancing the Tandava Dance.

Civa is said to perform this dance in the evening in the presence of Parvati seated on a diamond throne in order to relieve the sufferings of the devas. The dance of Nataraja is believed to symbolise the action of cosmic energy in creating, preserving, and destroying the visible universe.

In all Civa temples of importance in the Madras Presidency, Nataraja has an honoured place. The most important temple erected in his honour is at Chidambaram, which is held with great sanctity from very early times. In the days of Tirujnanasabamdar, the famous Caiva saint in the middle of the seventh century A.D. it had already become famous, and the history of the temple is connected with the lives and stories of many Caiva saints. The God at Chidambaram was the family deity of the Cholas.

Generally the worshippers of Civa were numerous from ancient times as he was the God commonly worshipped by all classes of people because of the diversity of his nature. Amongst his earliest



Worshipper of Civa called Civa-Bhakta of the time of Patanjali 150 B.C.



Earliest worshipper of Civa known as Pasupata (ascetic)

worshippers the Kshatriyas counted the most, as from the fierce aspect of the God he easily found favour with those warlike people. In the Rig Veda, we have seen that he was identified with Rudra. In the Samhitas, his character became more developed till finally in the Svetasvatara Upanishad composed between 500 B.C. and 300 B.C. we see him raised to the position of Brahm. At the time when the movement towards theism was in full swing from about the year 200 B.C., we see that there arose among the twice-born householders a religious distinction, which separated them into two main actions—the worshippers of Vishnu and worshippers of Civa, who are known to us as Civa-bhaktas from the writings of Patangali who lived about 150 B.C. These Civa-bhaktas included amongst them (1) ascetics, (2) their lay-followers, (3) ordinary people, who had no connection with any other sect. These smeared their bodies with ashes and carried a trisul in their hands. Finally when the Epics were written, we see Civa occupying a somewhat similar position as Vishnu in direct and conscious imitation of New Vaishnavism. He came now to be regarded as Brahm of the Upanishads, but like the incarnations of Vishnu, Civa is not supposed to have appeared in different human disguises and forms to test, teach or gratify his votaries. The earliest worshippers of Civa of whom mention is made in the Epics are the Pasupatas—followers of the Pasupata doctrine. Pasupata is formed from Pasupati—Lord of flocks. Pati is the Lord, and man is the Pasu, bound by the fetters of the world and requires to be released by the Lord. The doctrine was supposed to have been taught in the beginning by God Civa himself, namely, that Civa himself was the source of the whole creation and that final union with him should be the desired aim of his worshippers. The Pasupatas worshipped Civa in the form of the Linga, conceiving him as a deity of wild aspect as Bhairava, and they admitted even the goblins, gunas and others in their worship with him. They admitted all classes within their fold. which accounts for a large following for the sect ; and it appears that they were not opposed to animal sacrifices. They besmeared their bodies with ashes and practised various modes of mortification. Some fasted for days, some lived only on water, some engaged themselves in Japa, some gave themselves up to concentration. Some were sitting in the midst of lighted fire, some behaved themselves like animals, when eating—that is, eating without the use of hands, some remained in water, some remained standing on one leg,

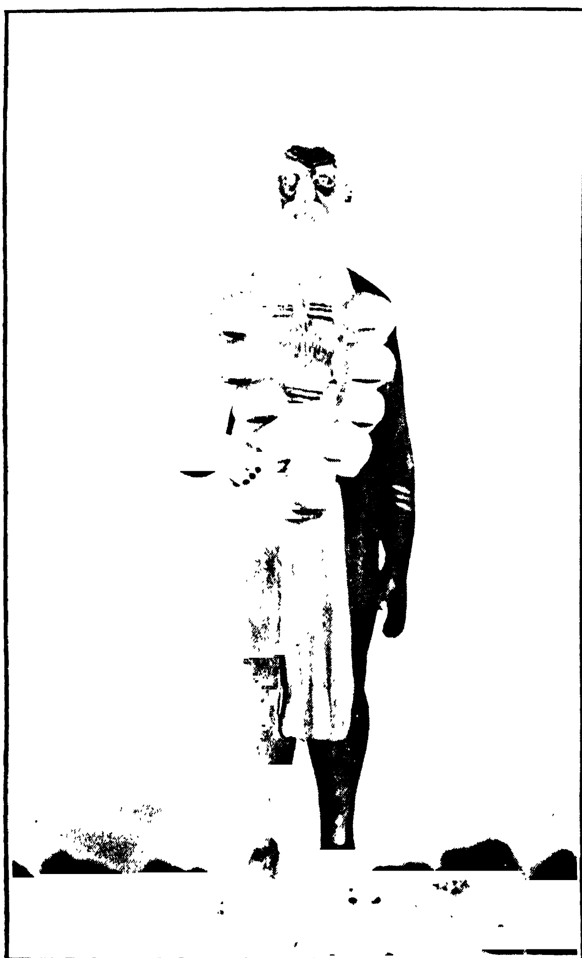
and some held up their hand. About the second century of the Christian era, the Pasupata sect seems to have been reorganised by a Brahmachari named Lakuli—the holder of lakula meaning a club, who afterwards came to be recognised as an incarnation of the God Civa himself. An inscription in an old temple near Eklingji (in the State of Udaipur) bearing date 971 A.D. states that Civa became incarnate in the country called Broach; and another states that he became incarnate in the Lata country (South Gujrat) and had then four disciples under him, who subsequently became the founders of four different schools. This new sect founded by Lakuli was almost identified with the old Pasupata sect who worshipped Civa and practised the Pasupata Yoga, besmearing their bodies with ashes and clay, wore black dresses and matted hair. It thus appears that these Pasupata doctrines found favour with the majority of people of all classes and had spread far southwards as far as Gujrat.

According to modern researches, the Pasupata doctrine dates even far anterior to Asoka, for we find it recorded that when Asoka visited Nepal about 249 B.C. he was accompanied by his daughter Charumati, who had adopted a religious life and settled herself in a convent built in honour of Pasupatinath about two miles distant north of Katmandu.

About this time or a little later the doctrine of a new school of thought already in existence began to influence men's minds which subsequently became enshrined in books called Agamas numbering about twenty-eight. The followers of these Agamas worshipped Civa mostly as Maheswara. The Agamas mark the appearance of Sakta ideas among the Civites, and contain rules regarding temple-building, image-making, and religious practices such as the wearing of the sect mark the Tripundra, which consists of three lines of ashes drawn horizontally across the brow, breast, arms and other parts of the body; and the belief generated in the efficacy of the use of mystic rites and charms. These hold that Civa possesses or develops in himself a Sakti or Power consisting of the rudiments of the individual soul and the material world, and from this Sakti, the world is developed. Man is by nature fettered by Ignorance, and Kama—the material cause of the world. Man can, therefore, only be liberated by the grace of the Lord, which is also a product of Civa's Sakti.



Worshipper of Civa as Bhairava.



Worshipper of Civa called Kalamukha

Wema Kadphises, a powerful prince of the Kushana race, who ruled over a large part of northern and north-western India about the middle of the third century A.D., was an ardent devotee of Maheswara, as he had the image of the God Civa holding a trident in his hand and a figure of a Nandi imprinted on the coins issued by him. About the fourth century A.D. the doctrine of the Pasupata sect adumbrated in the Epics, made its reappearance in the Vayu Purana composed at that time, parts of which contain panegyrics and hymns in honour of the God under his names Maheswara and Nilkanta. From this time onwards, that is, from the Gupta period Civaism became the next dominant creed in the land, and counted all classes from princes and chiefs to ordinary individuals as its votaries, as can be seen from the Udayagiri inscription recording the dedication of a cave to Shambhu (Civa) about 400 A.D. and the invocation addressed by the poets and men of letters of the times to God Civa at the beginning of their literary compositions.

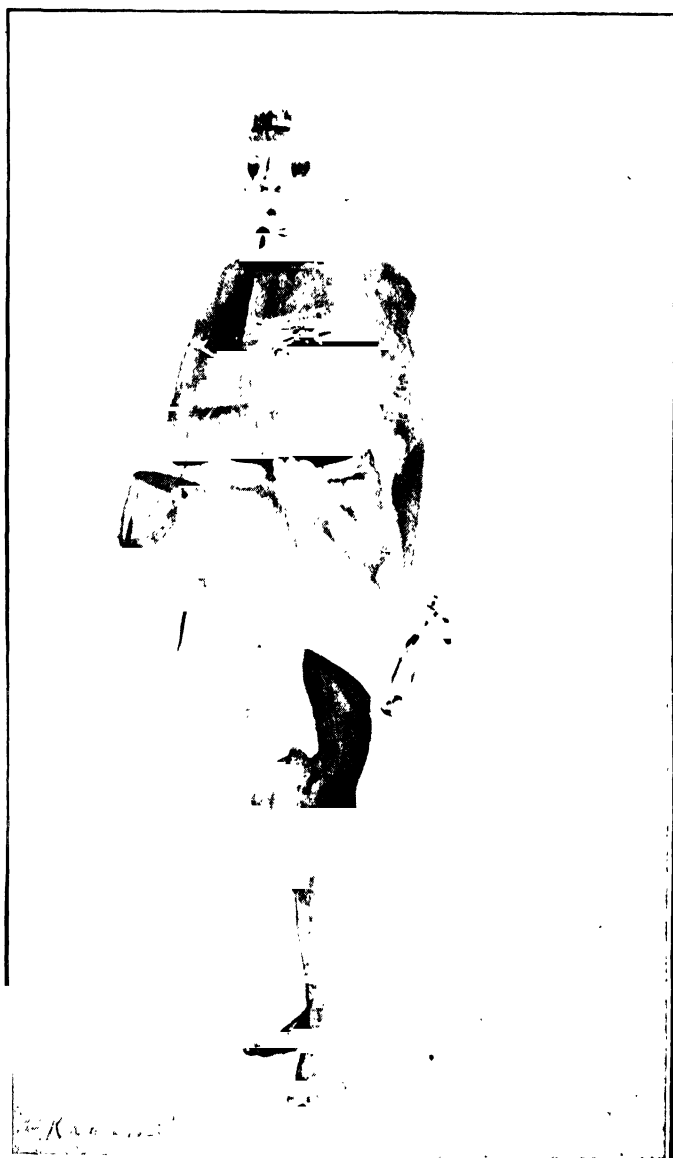
Pushyabhuti, one of King Harsha's ancestors, was an ardent devotee of Civa and Harsha himself distributed his devotions among the three deities of his family, Civa, the Sun, and Buddha, the first for claiming his greatest worship. Hiuen Tsang, who visited India at this time, says that he found in large numbers Civites belonging to the Pasupata sect wherever he went and especially at Benares where he saw them worshipping Maheswara, having their bodies smeared with ashes, going unclothed and their hair tied in a knot. Bana, the court poet of Harsha's time, describes them as dressed in red and having their bodies smeared with ashes.

The influence of this vigorous Brahmanical revival in the north did not fail to show itself in the south and during the two centuries of the early Chalukya dynasty 550-750 A.D. the Brahmanical form of Hindu religion received special attention. Everywhere elaborate temples in honour of either Vishnu or Civa were erected, the famous among the latter being the Kailas at Ellora the most marvellous architectural freak in India erected in the reign of Krishna I 760-770 A.D., who completed the establishment of the Rastracuta supremacy. An inscription dated 943 A.D. found in Sira taluka, Mysore, shows that the Pasupata sect had spread itself as far as Mysore. Thus we see that the Pasupata sect, which has its beginning in the early epics, was reorganised about the second century A.D. and had

spread itself far to the south as far as Mysore about the beginning of the 10th century.

The Kapalikas, not sufficiently distinguished from the Kalamukhs, appear to be an old sect, almost coeval with the Pasupata sect. They indulged in rites and ceremonies of a very revolting nature, and they worshipped Civa in his fierce aspect as Bhairava. They smeared their bodies with ashes, and wore a garland of skulls, and had their bodies marked with a streak of black stuff. Their hair was turned into a Jata. The Kapalika was dressed in a Kaupin made from a tiger's skin, and in his left hand he carried a skull, and in his right, a bell. This sect probably indulged in human sacrifices, as we read in Bhavabhuti's Malati-Madhav of a certain Kapalika attempting to sacrifice Malati to his Goddess Chamunda. Sri Sankaracharya had also in his journey met with a certain Kapalika near Ujjain. These were credited with possessing miraculous powers obtained by the practice of Yoga. The Kalamukhs, according to Ramanuja, maintained that for the attainment of desires in this world and the next, the votaries of Civa in his Bhairava aspect, should eat his food in a skull, besmear the body with ashes of a dead body, eat the ashes, hold a club, keep a pot of wine and worship the God. From their habit of eating their food in a skull and holding the club, they were easily and closely identified sometimes with the Pasupatas and sometimes with the Kapalikas. They wore a bracelet of Rudrakshas, a string of the same beads on the matted hair on their head and carried with them a human skull and a wooden club. Ramanuja calls these Mahavratins from the great vow they observed in eating their food from the human skull. Nagavardhan, nephew of Pulakesin II, who ascended the throne in 610 A.D., made a grant of a village near Igatpuri for the worship of Kapaleshwara and for the maintenance of Mahavratins designated Kapalikas or Kalamukhs. This establishes the fact that the sect prevailed in Maharastra at the time. Similar grants show that some remnant of this sect prevailed also in Mysore so far down as the 12th century of the Christian Era.

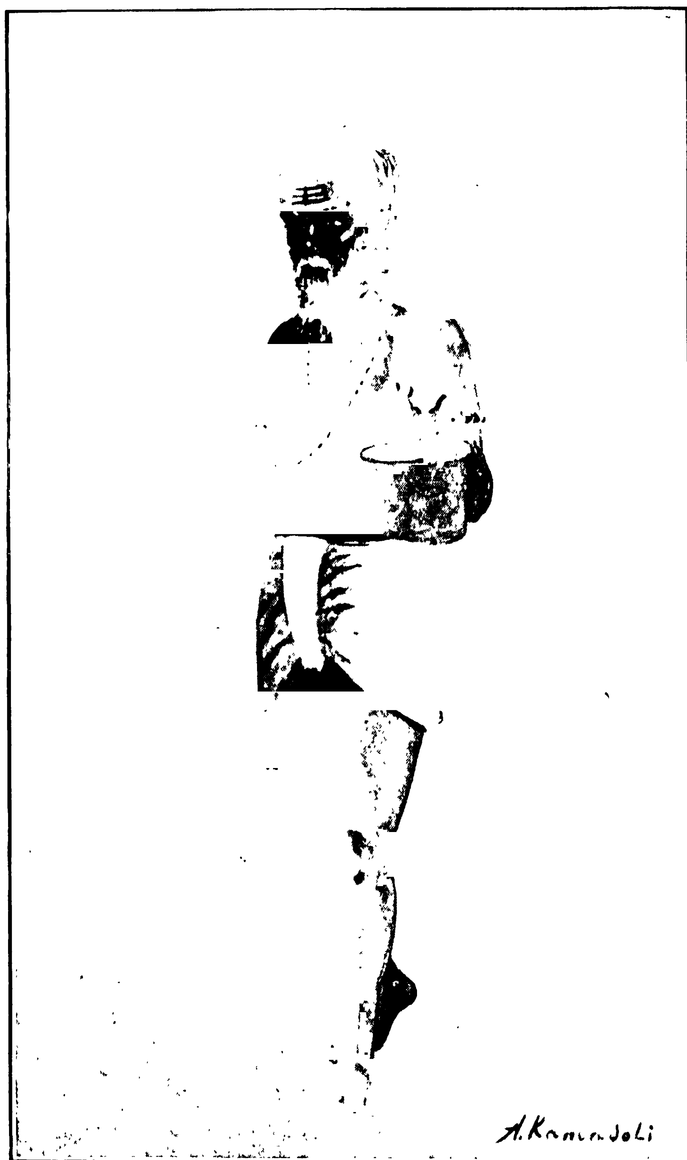
The Mallarees were a class of Brahmins in Central India, who worshipped Civa under the name of Mallari with his consort Mhalsa and religiously honoured and exalted the position of his vehicle—the dog. It seems that they offered human sacrifices and before conversion by Sri Sankaracharya they adorned their necks with



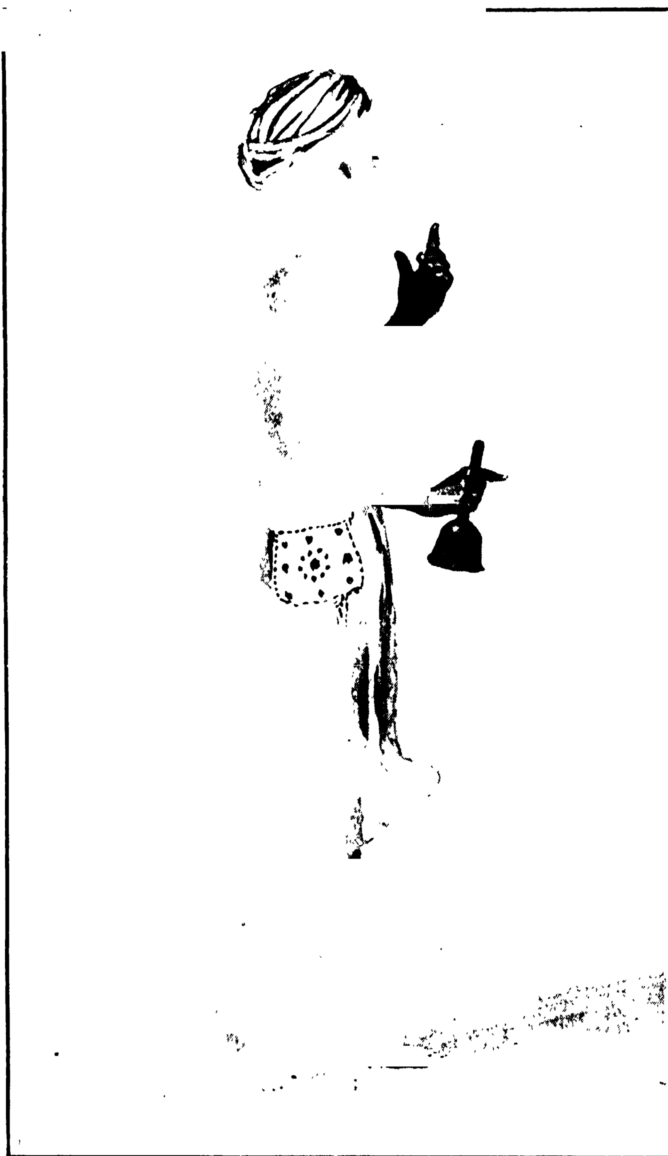
Worshipper of Civalled Aghori.



Worshipper of Civa called Mallharee shown as barking like a dog.



Worshipper of Civa called Mallhari before 8 A.D



Worshipper of Civa called Vaghya.

garland made of skulls and behaved like dogs. Later on God Civa became the tutelary deity of many of the Maratha families. As such he is called Khandoba depicted as carrying in his right hand an unsheathed sword and in the left the shield. He is usually represented on horse-back attended by a dog. He is accompanied by his consort Mhalsa. He is shown with four arms, the two extra arms, holding the Trisula and the Damaru, signifying him to be an incarnation of Civa. His worshippers are called Vaghyas, who besmear their bodies with Turmeric powder (commonly called Bhandar) carry a bell in the right hand, and a pouch made of tiger's skin in which they keep the Bhandar.

The extension of the Civa Cult in the South is supposed to be the principal work of one Kumarila Bhatta, who is said to have lived in the first half of the 7th century A.D. (590-650 A.D., according to the researches of the late Mr. Shankar Pandurang Pandit). He is believed to have been a Brahmin from Behar, whilst others connect him with the Tamil Land. He went through a course of studies open to a Brahmin youth, when suddenly he took a fancy for studying Buddhistic theology. After a time he left the Buddhist School with the object of becoming a stern opponent of the Buddhist Faith, and carried on a ruthless warfare against its followers. In this, he greatly succeeded. He held that the earlier part of the Vedas relating to the Karma Kanda (performing sacrifices, observing tapas, etc.) was alone capable of saving men, and therefore to him, the really religious part of life was to go through the various rites enjoined in the Sacrificial Khanda, a section of the Vedas. He wrote a commentary on Sabaraswami's commentary on the Purva-mimavsa, which is his chief literary work. Tradition asserts that he had a large following, and when he thought that his work was over, he is said to have committed suicide by throwing himself into fire. He gave a special impetus to the sacrificial form of worship which resulted in creating such confounding notions regarding the several rites and ceremonies in vogue already from the time of the Guptas, that various sects came into being, each having a certain text from the Vedas interpreted in a manner to suit its own ends. This led in course of time to ceaseless wranglings and quarrels amongst themselves with the result that there arose at length in the minds of the people a genuine craving for some kind of a harmonising principle, and a desire for a general religion of peace. Union was possible when a common basis could be found so as to be

comprehensive and allow for differences of opinions philosophical as well as practical. This was the kind of influence that was very urgently needed at the time, and it was reserved for Sri Sankaracharya to supply the need.

It was about the year 788 of the Christian Era, that a child was born to a Namburdi Brahmin Sivaguru, then living in an obscure village named Kalati in Malabar. Sivaguru was an ardent devotee of Civa, and being without a child for a long time, he hailed the advent of his newly born son as a blessing showered upon him by his chosen deity and so named him Sankara. At the age of seven, Sankara had the misfortune to lose his father, but the event did not prevent his mother from sending forth her son to the study of the Vedas and Vedangas according to the custom of the time. After completing his studies of the Shastras, Sankara returned home to his mother. Proposals now came in to his mother for his marriage but Sankara seems to have declared his intention to be a Sannyasi. Meeting naturally with great opposition from his mother he desisted from carrying out this his wish till a favourable opportunity should offer itself. He had not long to wait, for one day whilst he was bathing with his mother in the river he felt that he was being seized by a crocodile. Considering this as a fitting opportunity to declare and carry out his heart's desire, he addressed his mother, " Look here, dear mother, I am being dragged down to death, let me have the pleasure of dying as a Sannyasi." On seeing her son in the serious condition, struggling between life and death, she at once declared him to be a Sannyasi. Now he was at liberty to abandon the world, and out of gratitude and love towards his mother, Sankara promised her to be ever ready to attend to her spiritual needs, and then placing her under the care of his relatives and making provision for her life-time, he left his place Kaladi in search for a Guru with the ardent desire of getting himself formally initiated into the holy order of Hindu Sannyasa.

This great desideratum was fulfilled in the person of one Swami Govindacharya, pupil of the still famous Yati Gaudpadacharya who is considered to be the founder of the Smartha sect. By him he was admitted into the order of the Sannyasis. Sankara then visited Benares, the seat of ancient learning in India and soon distinguished himself in dialectics and philosophy. Consequently he began to attract people and his stay in Benares appears to have been



Worshipper of Civa called Paramhansa, one of the sects of Dasnamees.



Worshipper of Civa called Dandi, one of the sects of Dasnamees.

considerably long, for he is reputed to have written all his important works during his stay at the place, as he had them opportunities to show his works to the savants of the time and subject them to their criticism and correction. Leaving Benares, he went to Prayag, from which place he went to Mahismati, a place near Hastinapur, where the chief Pandit of the Court Mandan Misra lived with all the splendor of a courtly life with his wife Bharati—a highly gifted and talented lady. Mandan Misra was an advocate of the Karma Marga as propounded by Kumarila Bhatta, but when challenged by Sankara regarding the efficacy of the doctrine, he had to acknowledge defeat which he gladly did and spent the rest of his life as a Sannyasi, in whose order he was admitted by Sankara. His wife too gave up worldly life and took up the avocation of a nun, following precedents laid down by the Buddhist nuns. Sankara then travelled through the Dekhan, preaching his doctrines, wherever he went and denouncing wicked forms of worship. Coming down to the source of the Tungabhadra, at Sringeri he built a temple which he dedicated to the Goddess of learning—Sri Sharada—and attached a Mutt, an institution similar to the Seminaries of the Jesuits of the middle ages, and placed Mandan Misra in charge of it. This institution is the most richly endowed and widely honoured among the South Indian Religious Institutions. Now news reached Sankara of the serious illness of his mother, and he went to Kalati to see her. True to the instinct of filial love, he performed the obsequies after her death and returned to Sringeri. From here he proceeded on a tour through the east coast districts until he reached Puri (Jagannath) where he established the Goverdhan Mutt. Returning again to Sringeri where he made his arrangements to carry on the missionary labours, he proceeded again on his tour to Northern India and on his way, visited Dwarka where he established a Mutt. From Dwarka he went to Badrinath, where he established a Mutt and built a temple to Narayana. Then he retired to Kedarnath, and here in the thirty-second year about 820 A.D. of his life his pure and chaste spirit left the mortal coil "to realise its identity with the Supreme Self". Such in brief is the out-line of a life which within a narrow compass of 32 years, gave India not only a purer form of religion but a system of philosophy which will be found to be most congenial and easy of acceptance to the modern Indian mind. We will now see what his teaching was, what end he had in view and what means he recommended, what was his method and what were the chief practical reforms which he introduced.

The main doctrines he expounded were (1) The difference between all created and seen, is not real but apparent, and that the essence of all is Parabrahma (God), (2) the atma (soul) of man is its essence is Parabrahma Rupa, that is identical with Parabrahma and (3) the knowledge of this identity of atma with Parabrahma " Tatvam asi, " *i.e.*, the realisation by the atma of its identity with Parabrahm, is essential for all to attain final liberation. The difference between all is due to the operation of Maya, the Inscrutible power of the Eternal Being. The chief means to attain this is to live and act in strict conformity with the teaching of the Vedas and Vedanta, and then to abandon all action and embrace Sannyas, as the first leads to the total extinction of all desires in the mind of man and the second leads to the attainment of that knowledge of God which is necessary for the attainment of final beatitude. It should be mentioned that he was not opposed either to the Karma Marg (life to be spent in performing ceremonies, observing fasts, visiting places of pilgrimage, subjecting oneself to severe penance and the like) or to the Bhaktimarg, so much emphasised later by the Vaishnavite acharyas and saints.

The one main result of this comprehensive and pantheistic basis was that it allowed every sect to worship its own deity, but at the same time it showed that it was reasonable to allow mutual toleration as though Brahma was accepted to be the supreme spirit as distinct from Civa or Vishnu, they were left undisturbed.

All this work he was able to do by means of his peregrinations from place to place where he caused men of all shades of opinion to gather together, and after discussion finally succeeded in winning them over to his point of view, and by means of his philosophical writings which are "characterised by great intellectual capacity and an extremely fine style combining in it at once the language of the child and the philosopher ".

The chief reforms introduced by him were :—

(1) He prohibited the marking of the body with hot metallic stamps.

(2) He tried to abolish certain disagreeable sects which prevailed even from before his time, *e.g.*, the Saktas, Bhairavas, the Mallarees, the Kapalikas and others.

(3) He organised maths or monasteries to form centres of Advait learning and influence and succeeded in winning over a vast body of Civa worshippers in the South Guzerat and in the north of India to the faith he propounded.

(4) He rigorously excluded women from the monasteries established by him. The main result of Sri Sankara's teaching was that it purged the Hindu Civite Society of some of its most disagreeable features and wiped away completely some of the Civait sects that prevailed long before his time. We had, for instance, the Saivas who had the Linga branded on both the arms, the Raudras who had the Trident branded on their fore-head, the Ugras who had the Damaru branded on both the arms, the Bhattas who had the Linga branded on the fore-head, the Jangams who bore the Trident on the head and carried a Linga of stone on their persons, and the Pasupatas who had the Linga branded on the fore-head, arms, heart and navel, and the Mallarees, the Kapalikas, the Kalamukhs noticed before. These have now disappeared and in their stead we have now the Dasanamees, who include a number of Civite worshippers, the Smartas, and others, who call themselves either Sannyasis or Vairagees, the latter mostly belonging to the itinerant mendicant classes of India.

The Dasanamies.

This was a definite order of Sannyasis established by Sri Sankara. These are divided into ten sub-divisions, and among these the Dandis seem to be the most important. They have derived their name from the staff or ' Danda' which they always carry with them and to which is attached the sacred thread of the wearer which is taken off at the time the disciple is admitted into the Order. The Dandis are mostly recruited from the Brahmin class. They will neither cook nor beg, but are supported by the lay-followers of the faith. They wear one long unsewn reddish cloth, and carry about with them all their belongings, which consist of a small mat to lie upon, a pot to contain water and the Danda. Among them may be found some learned men, who are well conversant with Shastric Lore. These are held in great respect, as for instance the Paramahansa.

The Smarthas.

According to some writers Sri Sankara organised this sect but others place the origin of this sect previous to his time, the exact

date of which is not possible to determine. The word "Smarth" comes from Smriti and the idea is that the Smarth-worship depends upon Smriti that is upon the Sutras, in particular the Baudhayana-Grihya-Sutras of any particular School. These were won over in large numbers by Sri Sankara to his teachings. These accept the Advaite doctrine of Sri Sankara and observe the worship of five gods, namely, the Sun, Ganesh, Civa, Vishnu and Devi—together called "Panchayatana", but give preference mostly to Civa. Madhav and Sayana who lived at the time of the beginning of the establishment of the Vizianagar Kingdom and who produced much brilliant and philosophic work were Smarthas. So was also Makundraj, the author of Vivekasindhu, the earliest piece of Marathi Literature at the end of the 12th century. Among these, Smarthas may be counted some Saraswats who are spiritually under the guidance of their Swami, who traces his discipleship to the famous Yati Gaudpadacharya who lived according to some authorities about two centuries before Sri Sankara.

Sannyasis, Vairagees and others.

This Order includes a number of associations more or less regular, and formed partly in some cases by ascetic tendencies and in other by pretentions to asceticism. These ignore distinction of caste, are generally met with living as mendicants practising mortifications. They generally wander from place to place, and some of them sell charms, practise exorcisms, tell fortunes or are jugglers or wandering ministrels. Among these may be mentioned the Yogis. The chief among these are the Gorakhnathis, followers of one Gorakhnath, who is supposed to have lived about 1200 A.D. He seems to be an historical person and his name is associated with the rite of a new type of Yoga—as distinct from the Yoga of Patanjali. It is called Hata-Yoga, its chief distinctive doctrine being that by certain purifications of the body and certain prescribed physical exercises, concentration of the mind called Samadhi can be attained. His followers are called Kanphata Yogis (Split-eared Yogis). They have a great slit cut in the hollow of each ear, so as to admit a big circular ear-ring of glass, wood or horn, being put in. They wear several necklaces. They worship Civa and also Gorakhnath—the founder, who had a monastery at Gorakhpur where he is said to have died. Animals are offered as sacrifice in the temples of the Nath sect. Besides the Yogis, this class include others who practise



Follower of Gorukhnath called Gorukhnathee.

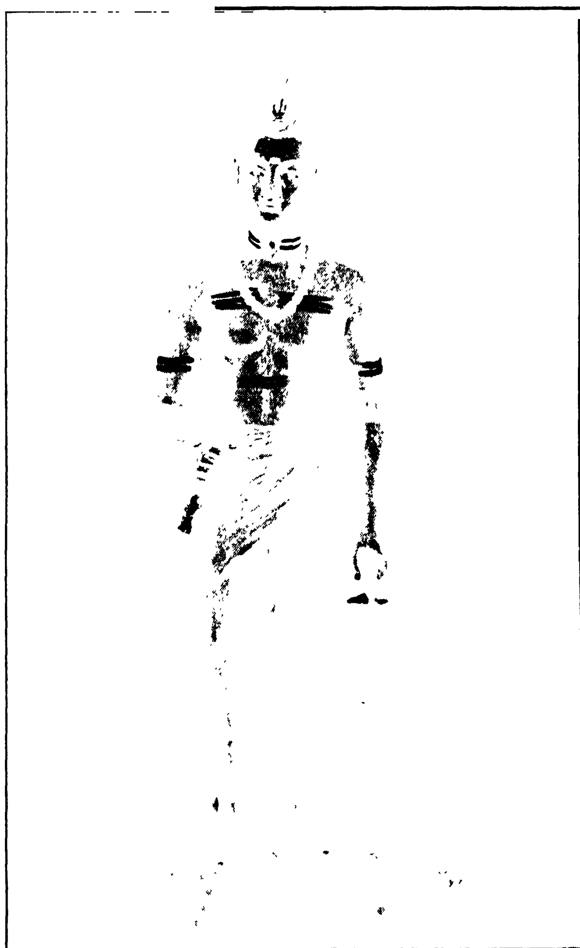


Follower of Gorukhnath called Gorukhnathee from Nepal.

austerities such as the Akasamukhis (who have their faces turned towards the sky), the Urdhvabahoos (who hold one or both of their hands up in the air), the Nakhis, who allow their nails to grow so that these ultimately protrude out of the skin, Brahmacharis, who profess to have given up the world and live as celebates, Aghoris who render themselves notorious for the disgusting vileness of their habits, the Gudars who carry a pan of metal in which they burn scented wood and others. Most of these wear—if they wear at all—ochre coloured garments, rub their bodies with ashes and wear necklaces of Rudraksha beads.

We find from inscriptions on the Bhita Linga and the Linga at Gudimallum in the Madras Presidency that Civaism had already penetrated so far south before the 1st century of the Christian Era. The subsequent history of the south of India for about two or three years later being almost unknown, nothing definite can be stated about the progress of the Civa Cult till we come to the time, when the rising tide of Brahmanism which started in the north in the reign of the Guptas, felt itself in the south and did not fail to produce its own effect. The Civaites, according to the Agamanta Civa Works, flourished at a place called Mantrakaleswar situated on the banks of the Godavari, and that there were four Civaite Mathos surrounding the temple of Mantrakaleswar. The Agamanta works have been tentatively referred to the 4th or 5th century of the Christian Era. We next meet with the record of a grant of land at Igatpuri to Kapaleswar belonging to the 7th century, and the erection of the famous Kailas temple in honour of Civa in the reign of Krisna I of the Rastrakootas. Just about this time as well, we have seen that the writings of Bhatta gave a special stimulus to Civa worship in the south. This was how Civaism flourished in Maharastra. How it fared further southwards and in the land of the Tamils, we have not the precise means to know, but a short poem in honour of Subramanyha (son of Civa) by Nakkira Deva (Circum 500 A.D.) shows that the Civa Cult had penetrated at that time in the land of the Tamils. From about this time onwards, we find that there arose in succession among the Tamils a group of Civa devotees called Adiyars, who were poet singers filled with overflowing Bhakti towards Civa. These went from temple to temple singing their hymns and dancing in raptures before the image of Civa—the dancing Lord, and drew crowds after them. They relied mostly on the

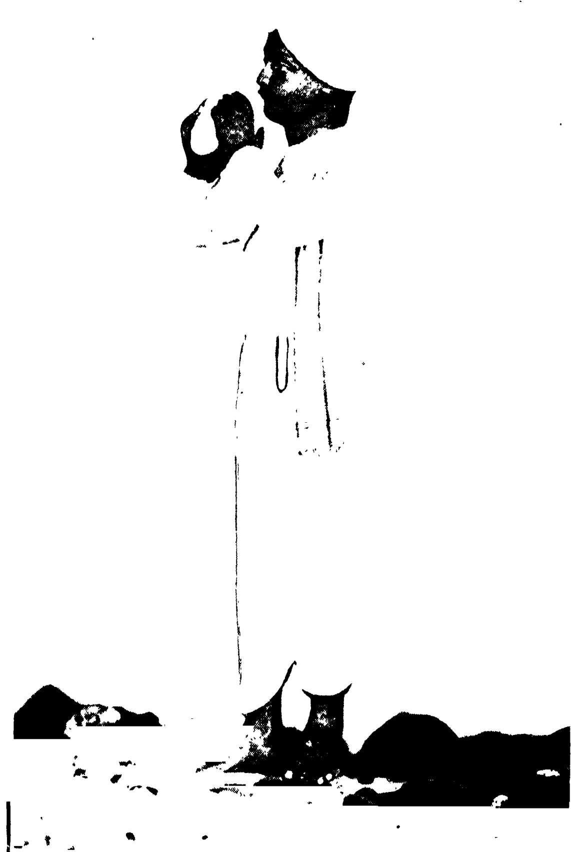
Puranas and the Epics. The highly respected among these are Nanasamandhar, Appar (circum 7th century) and Sundar Murti (circum 8th century). Later on there arose one Manikkavasagar (circum 900 A.D.), who at first a man of learning and position in Madura turned into a wandering devotee, and composed a number of lyrics, which from their contents, style, diction and mastery of metre show him to be an accomplished poet. He freely drew upon the Epics, the Agamas and the Puranas. He went on pilgrimage from town to town, worshipping at every shrine and composing songs in praise of the deity. From his time, according to Dr. Pope, dates the foundation of that vast multitude of Civa shrines, which constitute a peculiar feature of the Tamil land. The next great man was Nambi Andar Nambi (985-1018) who was a contemporary of the Vaishnava leader Nathamuni. He chiefly gathered together the hymns of the highly respected Bhaktas—Nanasamandhar, Appar, and Sundara and called the collection 'Tevaram' that is Divine Garland, and set them to Dravidian music. The Cult of Civa which had already attained some importance with the earlier Tamil Bhaktas from about the beginning of the 7th century, now found its powerful advocates in these Bhaktas and the Chola Kings, who came into prominence from about the middle of the 10th century and who professed Civaism. The great Chola King Raja Rajadev (985-1018) was a great worshipper of Civa and under his patronage, Nambi succeeded in arranging to have the Tevaram sung in the chief Civite Shrines. Sung by a special choir distinct from the priestly ministrants, who chanted the Vedic hymns, these hymns gave the worship a fresh interest and splendour without disturbing the ancient Sanskrit lithurgy. The magnificent temple at Tanjore built in honour of Civa, by Raja Rajadev and another enshrining a huge monolithic Linga of black granite by his successor testify the ardent devotion with which the Cholas worshipped the God. Thus far the Tamil Caivas had not formulated any theology of their own, but were dependent for it on the northern School. This defect was remedied by a subsequent School of thinkers, who belonged to a later period. Later on among the Tamils, there arose a body of Reformers, who condemned idolatry. They were called Sittars or Siddhas. They seem to have been quite active in the 16th and 17th centuries, but are now scarcely heard of. They composed several hymns in praise of Civa, and their movement is supposed to be the result of Muslim influence.



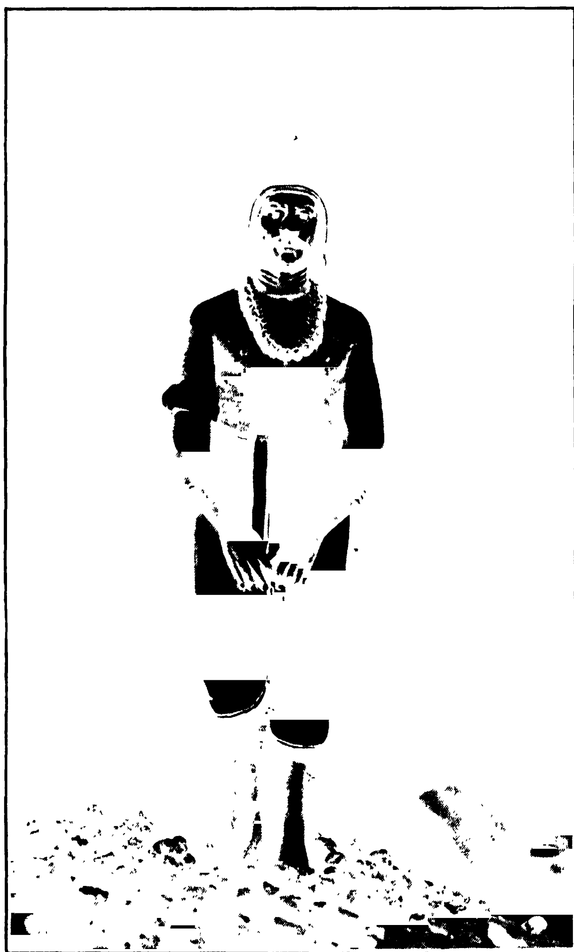
Lingayet Jangam in Nepal.



Lingayet carrying the Lingam on his chest.



Lingayet Jangam in South India.



Lingayet carrying the Lingam on his head.

Vir Saivas.

The Vir Saivas called Lingaits are a sect, which seems to have been founded, and reorganised in the middle of the 12th century. The sect according to tradition was founded by a set of ascetics, who are said to have been incarnations of Civa, in very old times but reorganised by Basava, who was Prime Minister of Bijjala (1156-1170) King of Kalyana in Kanara. Basava by birth belonged to the sect of Aradhya Brahmin and by the Lingayets, he is supposed to be an incarnation of Civa's Bull—Nandi. Connected with the King through marriage of his sister, Basava was made Prime Minister and was placed in charge of the King's treasury, of which he made a lavish use in supporting and maintaining many Lingayet mendicants called Jangams. When news reached the King's ears he sent his emissaries to apprehend Basava, but he managed to defeat them and succeeded after a time in causing the King to be assassinated.

The sect which now received such a great impetus at the hands of Basava seems to have its origin in the movement that at the time arose against the followers of the sacrificial religion who were the Brahmins, the Jains and the Buddhists, about the year 1160 A.D. on the borders of the Karnatic and the Maratha Country. The new sect was meant to give the Civites a more definite theology and a closer organisation and to win over the Jains especially to the worship of Civa.

The Lingayets regard Civa as the supreme God and offer worship to him alone. They worship him in the form of a small Linga, which is deposited in a reliquary generally suspended round the neck. There are few Lingayet Temples, and image-worship is prohibited. The Lingayets believe that the original Essence of Civa divided itself by its own Sakti (Innate power) into the Lingam and the individual Soul, and under the influence of its own power the Essence became the Creator of the world, and the individual soul its worshipper. The way to redemption (union in blissful experience with Civa) is that of Bhakti and a course of moral and spiritual discipline. The organisation of the sect is sufficiently peculiar. The sect founders—the ascetics—were originally five, each having a monastery of which he was the head. The five monasteries were at Kedarnath in the Himalayas, Sri- saila near Nandyal, Belehelter (west Mysore), Ujjain, Mysore, and at Benares. Every

Lingayet village has a monastery which is affiliated to one of these five monasteries. The Jangams are a caste, and these are looked upon as Gurus by the other members of the Lingayet community. The Guru is held in great esteem and is an object of worship, when he visits a particular house by its inmates. The Jangams are divided into two sub-divisions: (1) Those who are trained to perform all domestic ceremonies and act as Gurus; (2) those who receive philosophical and theological instructions and who must remain celebate. These are called Viraktas.

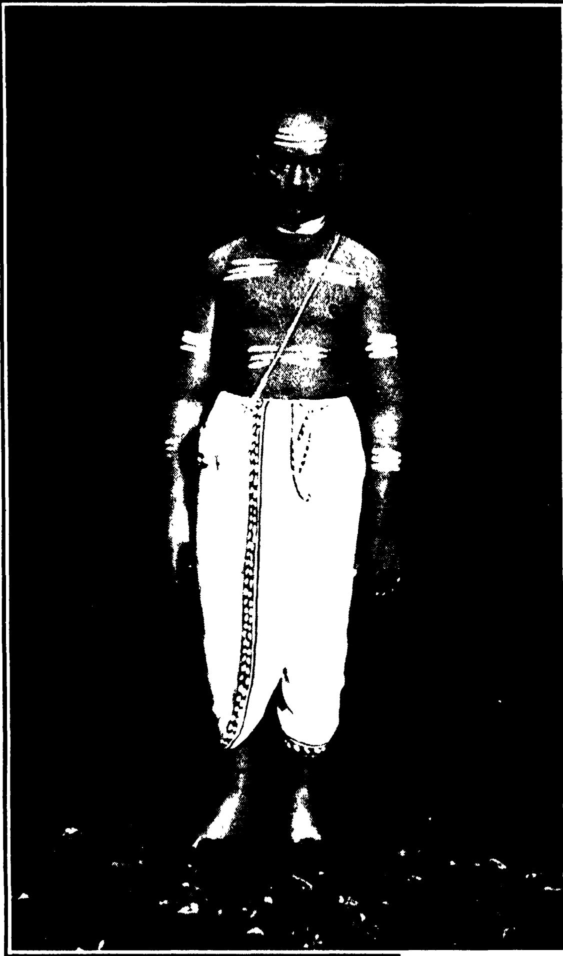
The Lingayets do not accept the teaching of the Vedas; they observe no caste distinction, they forbid child marriages, they allow widows to re-marry, they abstain from meat and drink, and they bury their dead.

The principal authorities of the sect are the Basava Puran and the Kanarese sermons known as Vachana, and Kanarese Puranas belonging to different dates. The literature is mostly in Kanarese and Sanskrit.

The rise of the Lingayets, which in the beginning secured a large number of the trading classes in the Kanara and Maratha country, checked the progress of Jainism in the south, and drove the last nail in the coffin of Buddhism, the existence of which in the Deccan can hardly be traced after this date.

Cashmere School of Civaism.

The Cashmere School of Civaism claims its origin to the Svetasvatara Upanishad and was divided into two branches—the Spandashastra and the Pratyabhijnashastra. The foundation of the first is attributed to Vasugupta, who lived in the beginning of the 9th century of the Christian era. He is the author of two principal treatises, the Civa Sutras and the Spandkarikas both of which are considered to have been composed under the inspiration of God Civa himself, and written with the express purpose of substituting the Advait philosophy for the more or less dualistic teaching of the Agamas. The school received additional support at the hands of Kallata, a disciple of Vasugupta who lived about 854 A.D. The principal tenets of this school are that Civa is independent, and creates merely by the force of his will. The individual soul is identical with the Supreme but is unable to see the identity because of its impurity, which consists in man's forgetting his own free and



Lingayet Trader.



Worshippers of a Devi called Vasudevs.

universal nature, in thinking that his body which is subject to decay, is his own self and in indulging in Karmic actions prompted under the influence of internal organs and senses. According to them the impurity vanishes when by means of intense contemplation the full vision of the highest breaks in upon the mind of the votary and absorbs all finite thought. When this condition remains stable, the individual soul is free and unites itself with the supreme soul.

The founder of the other school Pratysbhijnashastra was Somanada, who is the author of a treatise called Civadrsti. This is of a more practical nature and according to him release depends upon a course of discipline which consists in man's recognition of his identity with Civa. The world is considered to be a manifestation of Civa through his Sakti and the process of evolution is more or less similar to the one expounded by the Sankhyas. This system is known as the Trik, since it deals with Civa, Sakti, and Pratyabhijna—the law of recognition. This school was brought into more prominence by the writings of Abhinavagupta who lived about the end of the 10th century.

According to Madhava the author of Sarvadarshan Sangraha the school eschewed the practices enjoined by the old traditional Saiva School, and adopted a more humane and rational system of thought. It also produced a vast literature mostly of a philosophic character till Kshemendra who lived in the 11th century, from which time the movement began to be on the decline.

Devi-worshippers and Saktas.

Saktism in the bare acceptation of the term is worship offered to the supreme deity exclusively as a female principle. The worshippers are divided into two classes (1) those, whose worship amounts to little more than a reverence for the personification of the Energy of Nature and (2) those, whose worship is offered with a view to acquire supernatural powers or to cause destruction of the enemies of the worshipper through the help of the sakti, he adores. The second class may be considered as belonging to Saktism proper. According to Brahmanism, the One Personal God, when he wills to put forth Energy for the purpose of creation, is held to possess a double nature partly male and partly female. The first dawn of this idea appears to have existed in the time of the Rig-Veda, where we find that when the universe was about to be developed, there arose in the One Being, Desire, which produced the Mind and all other extant things. This idea of the duplex nature of the One Personal God seems to have been exemplified by the concept of Heaven (Dyaus) and Earth (Prithvi)—the ancient of all Vedic Gods, joining themselves together and producing the whole universe. We have also the other instance of Aditi, probably a personification of Nature taking the place of both Heaven and Earth, as parent of " what has been born and what will be born". When we come to the period of the Brahmanas and the Upanishads, we find this duality of Nature clearly explained. As for instance we find, " The One Being did not enjoy happiness when alone. He was desirous of a second. He divided himself into two". Later on the Sankhya System, taught the separate existence of Spirit (Self) and Prakrati (Matter) coeval and co-existent; and the union of the two was believed to be necessary before creation could take place. We find Manu again describing the Self-Existant as dividing his own substance and becoming half male and half female. The Vedantins more or less follow the teaching of the Sankhya School. Later on we find the female principle conceived as Maha Maya "The Great Illusion" worshipped under several designations and invested with a variety of forms, which correspond to one of the aspects of her two-fold nature, white or black; benevolent or cruel; the former presiding over the creative energies of life, and the latter representing the energies of destruction. To both these aspects a two-fold cultus is addressed; the public cultus or the cultus of the Right Hand, which except in one

Worshippers of Mahakali

Swastika used by the Saktas

Vamchari - Sakta Mark.

Dakshinachari Sakta Mark.

Sect marks made by the Saktas to show that they are also Worshippers of Civa

particular, namely the instance of animal sacrifice observe the general usage of Hinduism; the other cultus of the Left Hand, the observance of which is always a matter of secrecy. Incantations, magic and sorcery play a very important part in this last; and most of these ceremonies are performed with no other object than the attainment of Siddhi (Supernatural powers).

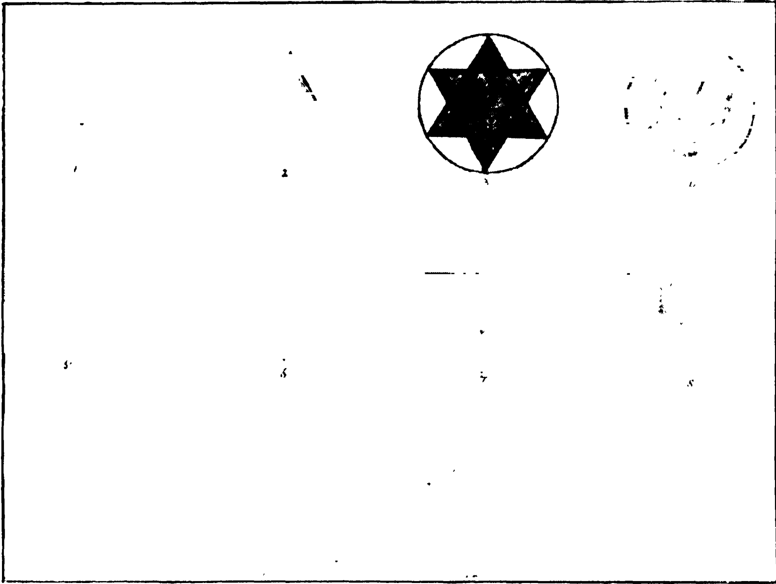
Mr. A. Grundewel, writing about the Buddhist sculptures, states that the image of one Divinity only appears to have always been produced with a certain evident pleasure, it is the ideal of Indian Woman, the Goddess of Beauty, Prosperity, of Domestic Blessings and of Wealth. The worship of this popular Goddess must have prevailed long before the Buddhist times throughout the whole of India. This opinion seems to be confirmatory of the view, that according to the Brahmanas, the Upanishads, and the subsequent philosophical schools, the first great cause divided itself into two, becoming half male, half female representing the Sakti or Energy, which in the case of Vishnu came to be associated with him under the name of Sri or Lakshmi, in the case of Civa came to be associated with him under the name of Parvati or Uma (Amba) in her milder aspect and under the name of Durga, ((Kali Chamunda, Chundi; Bhairavi, Vindhyavasini) in her wilder character; in the case of Brahma came to be associated with him under the name of Saraswati. In the later Puranic age, this Energy, which was invested with a distinct personality, came to be regarded as consorts of the respective divinites with whom she first came to be associated.

In the Mahabharat, we find Saraswati worshipped at first a River-Goddess in the time of the Rig-Veda, later on identified with Vach (Speech) and thus adored as Goddess of Speech, and finally addressed and invoked as Goddess of Learning (compare the opening lines of the Mahabharat). Sri or Lakshmi, whose worship prevailed long before the Buddhistic times, also received adoration, but it was reserved for the later Gupta Kings to enthrone her on the high pedestal of worship and offer her honours equally and conjointly with Vishnu. We next find Durga adored and addressed as the Slayer of Mahisha and she is described as dwelling on the Vindhya Hills and is delighted with the offerings of wine and flesh. Among the other honorific names, she is named Kumari, Kali, Mahakali, Chandi, Chamunda, Bhairavi and others. She is next associated with Civa as his consort and is named Uma or Parvati.

All this presupposes the fact that the adoration of all these Goddesses as typifying the energy of the different Gods, was prevalent long before the Mahabharat was composed, and later on, when we find Durga described as a fierce Goddess dressed in sylvan vestment and delighting in the offerings of flesh and wine closely identified with a Goddess living on the Vindhya Hills, we cannot resist the temptation to conclude that the Aryans had by this time bridged over the gulf that existed between them and the aboriginese, and in consequence had admitted into their pantheon Gods and Goddesses worshipped by the mountaineers and other aboriginal tribes of India, who worshipped these fierce Goddesses with offerings of wine and animal sacrifice. Thus by about the year 500 A.D. we find that a distinct Devi-worshipping sect had been formed, and by the same process which the worshippers of Vishnu and Civa had followed, the Devi became identified with the Supreme Reality and therefore worthy of worship. The chief work composed in elaboration of this concept at this time was the Devi Mahatmya, which is now the chief document in use among the Devi worshippers or Saktas as they came to be called.

The bibliography of the Saktas consists of a body of writings, which are generally known as the Tantras, and these are said to number about sixty-four. Some Sakta documents lie scattered among the Puranas, and in hymns in praise of a particular goddess. The Tantras like the Puranas contain treatises on Theology, Yoga, construction of temples, images, etc. The Sakta system of theology is mainly derived from Civaism, and the main cult gathers round the wife of Civa, and she is found also associated with other goddesses. The mystic and the miraculous side of the Yoga plays a large and important part in Saktism, and the practice of it leads the initiate to the attainment of superhuman powers called Siddhi. These powers are attained by the use of the Mantras, Bijas, Yantras, Kavachas, Nyas and the Mudras.

A mantra is properly an inspired vedic text, but with the Saktas it loses this character and becomes a mere spell or charm. This is based on the supposition that every letter of the alphabet is instinct with the power of Sakti; and mantras, that is words or letters framed from these letters possess in itself a power capable of causing good to one's own self or evil to one's enemies, if properly uttered and repeated according to prescribed formulas.



1. Yantra used by the Vaishnavites.
2. Yantra used by the Civites.
3. Yantra used by the Vaishnavites and the Civites
4. Yantra used by the worshippers of Brahma.
5. Yantra used by the worshippers of Civa and Brahma.
6. Yantra used by the worshippers of Vishnu and Brahma.
7. Yantra used by the Saktas.
8. Yantra used by the Saktas.
9. Yantra used by the worshippers of Brahma.
10 Yantra used by the worshippers of Brahma.



Worshipper of a Devi, following the Dakshinapanthee School.

The Bijas are letters or syllables invented for the sake of brevity to denote the root or essential part of a mantra, or the name of a deity to whom it may be addressed or some part of the body over which that deity presides. It is a belief with the Saktas that there exist certain occult channels called Nadi, the important of which is the Sushumna in the spinal cord connected with six great circles called Chakras of occult force in the human trunk the one above the other. Each of these is described as a lotus. The lowest and the important of these chakras is called Muladhar, which is supposed to contain Brahma in the form of a Linga and the Devi lies asleep in coiling itself round the Linga like a serpent. She is called Kundalini. She is awakened by means of Sakta Yoga. These channels and centres form the basis of miracle working power.

Yantras are mystical diagrams on metallic tablets often of copper and these are supposed to possess occult powers. The diagrams are generally combinations of triangular figures. For instance a triangle with its apex upwards represents Mahadev, who is fire personified, whereas Vishnu is represented by a triangle with its apex downwards as symbol of water or humidity. The two joined together represent the junction of the two elements together. A circle represents Brahma meaning eternity. The Sri-Chakra is the most important of these. It is supposed to represent the orb of the Earth. In the centre there is a drawing of a mouth, to represent the Sakti presiding over the circle. Sri Sankara is stated to have placed such a representation of the Sri-Chakra in each of the four monasteries founded by him, and this had led some writers to believe that he was a Sakta or Sakri-worshipper. The belief in the magic power of the diagrams has led to the use of sect marks. These consist of lines, curves, circles, spots, and designs which are painted or smeared over the parts of the body in order to place the wearer under the protection of these powerful instruments and the divinities they represent. The Sakta mark is generally the Tripundra made of charcoal with clarified butter. This is made by the Dakshinacharees or followers of the Right Hand Path; the Vamacharees or Followers of the Left-Hand path have a semicircular line or lines on the fore-head in red with a red streak half way up the centre, and a circular spot over the root of the nose.

Kavachas are amulets or talismans worn as a preservative against evil influences and may consist of a stone, a metal piece or a

piece of paper, on which a mantra is inscribed. This is supposed to protect the wearer as a cuirass or a breast-plate in battles of ancient days.

Nyas consists in mentally assigning various parts of the body to the protection of tutelary deities with the imposition of the hand or fingers accompanied by the repetition of certain texts.

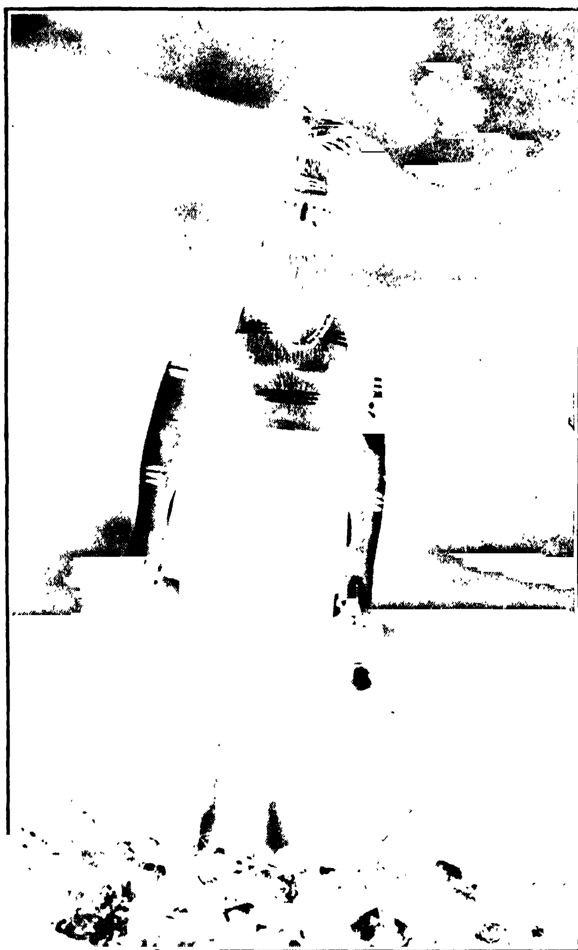
The Mudras are interchangings of the fingers supposed to possess occult meaning and to have extraordinary efficacy.

The Saktas are spread all over India, and form a numerous community among the Hindus, more especially in Bengal. They are divided with respect to their ceremonial into two main sects: (1) The Dakshinacharees or Right Hand Worshippers and (2) Vamacharees or Left Hand Worshippers.

The Dakshinacharees represent the purer right hand ritual. These have a public worship in temples. These worship the Devi either as Gramdevata signifying a deity of the village or town or Kuladevata where the whole family devotes itself to the service or Istadevata that is a chosen deity. In the manner of worship, the Dakshinacharees are divided into two classes: (A) those who worship strictly in accordance with Vedic and Puranic rites; (B) those who worship according to Puranic rites, but at the same time observe the practice of offering wine and flesh.

The movement of the class "A" worshippers, it seems, gathered additional strength from the time Sri Sankara purged the ancient system of all their grosser forms, and later on when the Bhakti element grew strong. The composition of the Devi-Bhagvata resulting from the influence, which the Bhagvat Puran then exercised on the minds of the people, completed the reformation which had been once started.

Their worship is confined mainly to Saraswati, who is worshipped as Goddess of Learning, to Sri or Lakshmi, who is worshipped in the first place with Vishnu and then as Goddess of Prosperity, to Parvati or Uma or Gauri as consort of the God Civa. Even Durga is worshipped but in her aspect as a benign goddess and the prefix " Shanta" meaning :' mild" is added to her name and she in hence designated as " Shanta Durga", and is the Kuldevata of many a Hindu family.



Worshipper of a Devi, follower of the Vamamargi School.



Worshippers of a Devi called Gondhalees.
Wandering bards.

The goddesses worshipped by Dakshinacharees of the "B" class are: (1) Kali, otherwise known as Mahakali, is worshipped with liquor and propitiated with animal sacrifice. She is shown with a gaping mouth, with her hair uncombed, she has four hands, she wears a garland formed of the skulls of demons, she holds a sword in one hand and a dead body in the other, she is black coloured, she has the whole sky as her vestment, she wears earrings consisting of two dead bodies. She has terrible teeth, she is supposed to dwell in burning grounds and she is shown as standing over the body of Civa. She was the patron goddess of the Thugs. She is worshipped most in Bengal and Assam.

(2) Bhavani: The worship of Bhavani seems originally to possess an aboriginal character. She was the patron deity of the Ramoshees and when towards the beginning of the 17th century A.D. her cult had spread through the length and breadth of Maharastra, she appears to have been raised to the position of a tutelary deity by some of the important Maratha families. Her famous shrine is at Tulzapur in the dominions of the Nizam. The original building is stated to have been destroyed by the Bijapur General Afzul Khan on his way from Bijapur against Sivaji, but is said to have been rebuilt later by the Rajas of Satara and Kolhapur. Another temple stands erected to her honour in the Fort at Pratapgarh by Sivaji himself. The worship offered to this goddess is mostly according to Puranic rites but animals are freely sacrificed. She is identified with Amba or Durga.

The following are among the Maratha devotees of Bhavani, who combine in themselves both the professions of a bard and a priest. The chief among these are:

The Gondhalees, who are performers of the Gondhal dance. These are beggars begging from door to door. The dance is performed in honour of the Goddess Bhavani which always takes place at night. The dancers are generally five. The chief dancer is dressed in a long white oily coat reaching to his ankles, wears a cowrie shell necklace and anklets with bells. He takes his stand in front of the goddess whose image is worshipped at the time. The second of the troupe stands on the right of the headman with a burning torch in his hand. The three others stand behind him with the usual musical instruments. The Gondhal commences with a dance and the headman repeats a story from one of the epics.

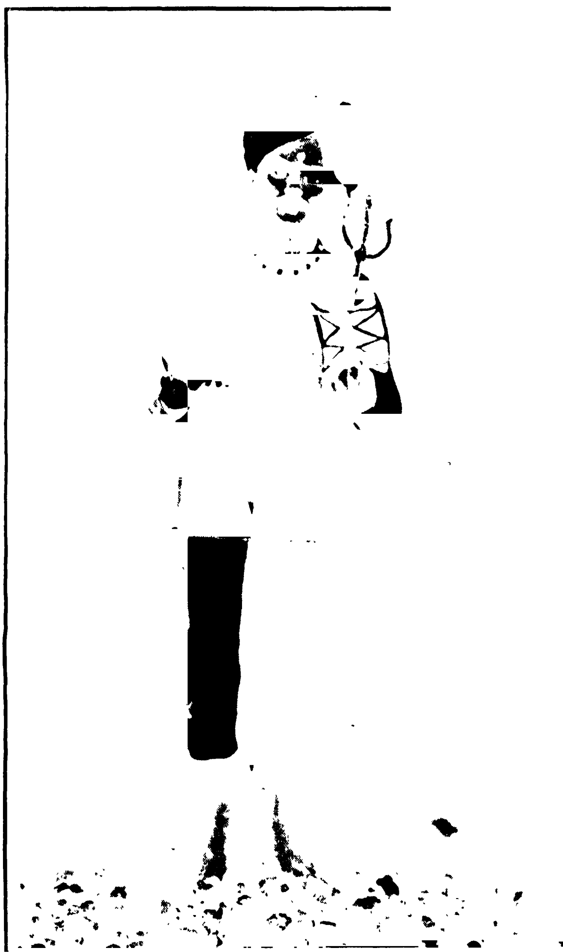
The Aradhees: These are recruited generally from the lower classes. When they go to beg, the Aradhee women wear their ordinary dress, while the male wear a long coat reaching to the ankles, besmeared with oil and tie their hair in a knot like women. They wear a garland of cowrie shells hanging from the left shoulder to the right. From one of the shell necklaces hangs a cloth bag encrusted with shells in which they carry ashes. They beg from morn till noon and generally go out in companies of four or five carrying with them a tuntune (a one stringed fiddle), a pair of tal and a drum. They worship Bhavani.

The Bharadees are a class of wandering beggars chanting verses in honour of Ambabai, playing on a drum, shaped like an hour-glass called dumru, and dancing with lighted torches in their hands.

The Bhutes are the followers of the Goddess Bhavani of Tulzapur and go begging with a lighted torch in their hand called the " pote," and playing upon the tuntune and a pair of tals. They are generally four in number, one playing upon the flute, the other carrying the budli (a vessel containing oil to be poured upon the torch), the third playing upon the tuntune and the fourth the principal figure carrying the torch. The last named wears a necklace of cowrie shells and has a square breast-plate or tak, with the image of the goddess embossed upon it hanging from his neck.

(3) Worshippers of the Goddess Yellama—one of the Gramdevatas worshipped as a Sakti. She has a temple erected to her honour on the Yellama Hill in the district of Belgaum. She is said to be the same as Renuka, wife of the sage Jamadagni, who was killed by her son Parashram in obedience to his father's command. She was allowed to be worshipped by the Pariahs, and in some respects she represents the Goddess Kali of Bengal. She is represented with a reddish skin and a very fiery face. She wears on her head a crown of serpents, on the forehead she has the tripundra. She has four hands, each being entwined with a serpent, and carrying a dumru, a trident, a noose, and a skull in one of her left hands. Animals are freely sacrificed before her image. The male ministrants of the goddess are called Jogti and the female are called Jogtins.

(4) Worshippers of the Goddess Mariayee is another of the Gramdevatas and she is supposed to be the goddess of plague, cholera, small-pox and other epidemics. She is worshipped all over



Worshipper of a Devi called Aradhee



Worshipper of the Goddess of Cholera called Mariayicha Bhagat.

India, but in Maharastra and in Gujrath, the goddess is worshipped more in her benignant aspect and designated Sitala ; that is cooling —meaning a goddess protecting the people from such malignant diseases such as small-pox, etc. Her worship is two-fold : (*a*) unattended with bloody sacrifice, when she is worshipped as Sitala, and (*b*) attended with bloody sacrifice. In some of the temples dedicated to her, the custom of hook-swinging prevails, that is of men being suspended in the air fastened to a pole by hooks stuck in their backs. There are some particular devotees of this goddess, who are Pariahs by caste and are known as Bhagats.

Mariayeecha Bhagat are Mahars by caste. Their dress consists of a long coat besmeared with oil reaching to the ankles, over which they wear handkerchiefs of different colours. They allow their hair to grow and tie them in a knot. They wear green bangles and other ornaments usually worn by women. They carry a long whip across their shoulder, which is called Kadaka. They are to be frequently seen in Bombay.

The Vamcharees.

The Vamcharees mean left-hand worshippers of the goddess who adopt a ritual in accordance with the Tantras, the composition of which dates from about the tenth century of the Christian era as opposed to the ordinary ritual. Their chief deity is the Devi or the Sakti of Civa called Durga or Kali ; but the Nayikas, the Yoginees, and even the fiend-like Dakinees and Sakinees also claim their adoration. Civa in his aspect of Bhairava claims equally worship from them, and it is the object of the Vamcharees to obtain their final deliverance with Civa as Bhairava.

The worship of Vamcharees resolves into different sects of which the Kaula is pre-eminent, which derives its authority from the Kaula Upanishad. The worship is performed in a form which is known as Chakra puja—a circle worship. In it equal number of women and men meet in secret usually at night and sit in a circle. The goddess is represented by an image or a Yantra and the liturgy consists in the repetition of certain mantras, and the ritual in making of certain Mudras and partaking of wine, flesh, fish, followed by abominable practices. This form of worship is now happily on the wane.

The Sauras or the Sun-worshippers.

The adoration of the Sun dates from the earliest times. Some ten hymns are addressed to Surya in the Rig-Veda. He is described as far-seeing, all-seeing, and beholding all the good and bad actions of men. He was reckoned among the Adityas, son of Aditi. In some passages he is identified with some members of the animate world, whereas in others, he is described as an inanimate object, being called the "Gem of the Sky." Sometimes he is called the chakra or the wheel of the Ratha in which he is daily drawn round his course, which we have already seen, later on, came to be regarded as one of the weapons in the hand of Vishnu, who in the earlier stages of his worship was identified with Surya. He measures days, prolongs life, dispels sickness, disease, and all creatures depend upon him for life.

The Puranas give a different account of the origin of his birth, and describe him as dark-red with three eyes and four arms. He holds red lotus in two hands, with the third he is bestowing blessings and with the fourth, he encourages his worshippers. He sits upon a red lotus and is drawn in his chariot by seven horses or with one horse having seven heads.

In the time of the Upanishads and later writings we find the Sun mentioned as being worshipped daily thrice with offerings of water, flowers and sandal. Kaushitaki is stated to have worshipped the luminary daily thrice with offerings of the kind stated above. Khadira in his Gryha-sutras, which deal with household ceremonies, recommends Sun-worship for the attainment of pleasures, etc. In the same way Yudhistira, the eldest of the Pandavas, is stated to have addressed a special hymn to the Sun-God, to obtain from him a vessel, which supplied him and his family with all food, whilst they were leading a forest life. A legend prevailed that Samba, a grandson of Sri Krsna, constructed a temple in honour of the Sun-God on the banks of the modern Chenab, and brought a special sect of sun-worshippers called Magas from outside India. These Magas are now closely identified with the Magi of the Persians, and they wore round their waist, a girdle almost similar to the Aivynonghen of the Avesta. That these Magi continued down to the 10th century of the Christian era as worshippers of the Sun is borne by the testimony of Varahamihira, who writes that the installation and worship of the Sun should be entrusted to a certain set of people called



Sun-worshipping Bairagee.



Follower of Guru Nanak called Akali.

the Magi, and also of Alberuni, who states that the Magi existed in India, when he visited it. It appears therefore probable that Sun worship, such as prevailed outside the confines of India on the west, entered India some time in the early centuries of the Christian era, and within the course of a century acquired some influence on the minds of the people ; for on the coins of Kanishka one of the Kushans, there is found a figure with the name Miiro, which is equivalent to the Sanskrit Mitra identified with the Sun. Subsequently under the Guptas, when the Puranas were re-cast and re-written, the cult which then prevailed in North India, was accepted by the other Hindus under the leadership of the Brahmins, who thoroughly hinduised the deity, and reckoned him as one of the deities belonging to the Pantheon. There is ample evidence to show that the Sun claimed a far wider worship at the time. About the time when the Kushans ruled, the great temple at Multan was supposed to have been built. The Chinese traveller, Hiuen Tsiang, describes the temple as grand and magnificent, and the idol, it contained as being made of gold encrusted with precious stones. The image was daily worshipped with flowers and lamps kept burning day and night. The temple was visited by all Indian kings and magnates, and was very richly endowed by them. During the Gupta rule the Sun worship prevailed like other creeds, and many temples seem to have been erected in his honour as for instance a temple at Mandasur in the year 437 A.D. by a guild of weavers, a record of a grant made in the year 464 A.D. for lighting a lamp in the temple of the Sun in United Provinces, a record of a grant made in the year 511 A.D. to the temple of Aditya—the Sun—the ruins of a temple at Gwalior erected in the reign of Mihiragula, and the ruins of temples of the Sun found from Multan down as far as Cutch. About the sixth century, King Harsha's father was an ardent devotee of the Sun as he is stated to have offered a "bunch of red lotuses set in a pure vessel of ruby and tinged like his own heart with the same hue" to the luminary daily. King Harsha himself was also a ardent devotee of the Sun along with Civa and Buddha. In the next century about the year 732 A.D. Chandrapida—the then king of Kashmere—built the famous Martanda Temple. In the 8th century we find Bhavabhuti making the Manager of Malati—Madhav offering prayer to the rising Sun to remove his sins and bestow blessings; whereas at the close of the century we find the Brahmins accepting

the Luminary as an object of daily worship in the Panchayatana Puja.

Following the wake of other religious movements, there is no wonder then that a set of devotees devoted to the exclusive worship of the Sun arose and these are known by the name of the Sauras. These were distinguished by a spot of red sandal on their forehead and bore a garland of red flowers round their neck. The name of the founder of the sect was one Divakara, who is stated to have come in conflict with the great Reformer Sankara. According to these the Sun is Brahm. There are six classes of devotees of the Sun: (1) worshippers of the Rising Sun, (2) worshippers of the Mid-day Sun, (3) worshippers of the Setting Sun, (4) worshippers of the Sun in all these three aspects, (5) worshippers who make it a vow to see the orb daily and worship it and do not eat anything until they have seen it, and (6) worshippers who imprint the orb of the Sun on their foreheads, arms and bosom with a heated iron piece and meditate on the Luminary in their minds. The Sun now is the chief divinity of the Brahmins and daily prayers are enjoined to be offered to him. At the ceremony of the Upanayana or investing the Brahmin youth with the sacred thread, the boy is made to look at the orb of the Sun, who is addressed to protect him.

Ganpatyas or Worshippers of Ganpati.

Ganpati who is accepted by the Hindus as the son of Civa and Parvati was as his name signifies placed in command of the Ganas by his father. He is also called Vinayaka from his being associated with the Vinayakas reckoned among the gods, and who are said to observe all the actions of men and remove all evils. Another name under which he is worshipped is Vighneshwara, as Civa is supposed to have charged him with the task of hindering wicked people from performing sacrifices and other virtuous acts and of rendering assistance to good men in their endeavours to perform such acts by removing difficulties when he is Vighnaharta. His worship appears to have been introduced about the fifth century of the Christian era just at the point when he became the God of the sect known as Ganpatyas. The theology of the sect appears in certain Upanishads composed at the time where he is proclaimed to be the Eternal Brahm and in some Puranas which contain legendary accounts of his having cured diseases, etc., and setting certain rules and ceremonies to be observed in his worship. Sri Sankaracharya when he

reorganised the Smartha sect introduced his worship in the daily worship offered by the Smarthas along with three other gods and a goddess and which is known as the Panchayatan puja. At Sri Sankara's time, the sect was divided into some small sub-sects most of whom have now disappeared. Yet his position as a God of Wisdom, of Success and as Remover of all obstacles is still retained, and he is widely worshipped in India.

Sri Datta Sampradaya.

This Sampradaya or sect of worshippers is named after Dattatraya traditionally supposed to be the son of the sage Atri and his wife Anusuya. He is deemed to be an incarnation of Brahma, Vishnu and Civa, the three Vedic gods and is venerated most as a Muni or Sage endowed with Yogic powers, which he used principally for the amelioration of mankind. His image is an object of daily worship. One Narshiv Saraswati, a Brahmin Sannyasi who lived in the fourteenth century of the Christian era, is considered to have introduced the cult. His name is associated most with Gangapur (in the Nizam's dominions) and Narsobachi Wadi on the Southern Maratha Railway—a place which appears to have derived its name from the name of its owner. After him his disciple Gangadhar Saraswati further strengthened the cult and wrote a special treatise called Gurucharitra dealing with the exploits of Sri Dattatraya, and which is now most venerated by the followers of the sect as their authoritative text. A later reference is found to have been made to this sect by the Manbhavs, who consider Dattatraya as the founder of their sect. Be that as it may, the Sampradaya claimed a large number of votaries, and at present has not an insignificant following, and from time to time a new Guru or a Sannyasis is put up as an incarnation of the deity by a band of worshippers crediting him with the working of one or the other miracle, as for instance in the case of the Swami of Akalcote and Manikprabhu of Maniknagar in the Nizam's dominions.

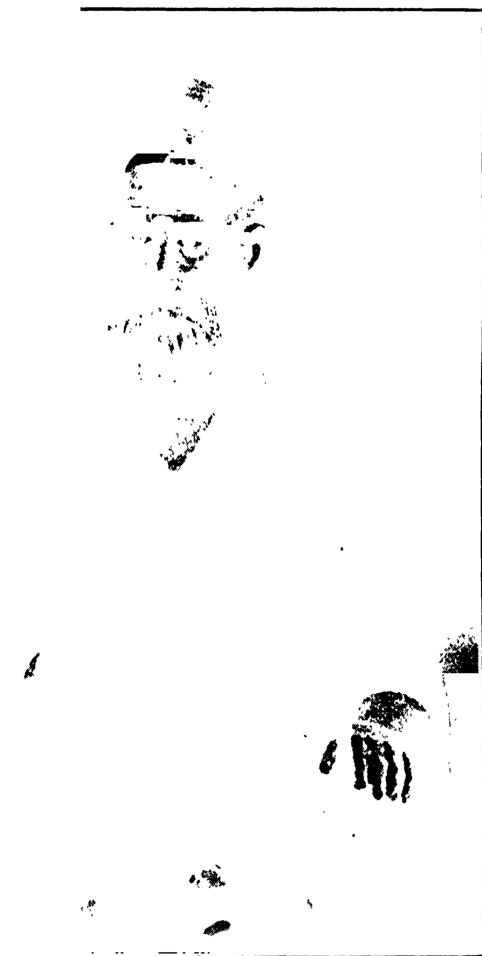
The Manbhav Sect.

The word Manbhav is said to be a corruption of Maha-anubhav that is, high minded. Traditionally they ascribe the foundation of their sect to Muni Dattatraya, whom they look upon as an incarnation of Sri Crsna. Historically, their founder is said to be Sri Cakracha—a Karada Brahmin who lived in the thirteenth century,

of the Christian era, about the time when Bhagvataism was being revived in the Southern Maratha country. They are most in the Deccan and Berar. They adore Crsna. They worship no images, and neither follow the Puranic religion of the Brahmins. Their chief authority is Lilacharitra in Marathi, which is said to expound the doctrines of the Gita. They admit all Hindus in their fold. They are divided into Vairagees, who wear a dark coloured robe with necklaces and earrings of Tulsi beads, and move from place to place, and live by begging ; and (2) Gharbarees, who are householders. The sect seems to have been severely criticised by Eknath and Tukaram so much so that they are now precluded from entering into the Temple at Pandharpur and other shrines. Later on the Peshwas persecuted them very severely.

Sikhism.

Sikhism was founded by Baba Nanak who was born in the year 1469 A.D. at Talwandi in the Lahore district of Panjab. He belonged to the Khatri caste, and by religion to the movement which produced Kabir and was to a great extent influenced by him. For a time he led a wandering life, and being acquainted with Hindi and Persian, he came into close contact with both Hindu and Mahammadan teachers. He composed hymns which he sang, whilst his disciple Mardan played the reback. He thus gathered a large number of followers, and arranged for them a collection in verse known as Japji, most of them in praise of God and intended for daily prayer. On religion, he held views similar to Kabir, maintaining that God is one, eternal and spiritual, and he must be worshipped from the heart. Caste according to him did not exist, for all can know and love God, and he was more for life of home than for asceticism. In his writings, traces of monistic Vedanta are found in several places, allusions being also frequent to the theory of the Laws of Karma, to belief in transmigration, and in the deceptive and illusive force of Maya and much importance was attached to a Guru. Nanak was followed by nine other Gurus, the second Guru Angad is known for his invention of a new alphabet known as Gurmukhi, and now used as the vernacular of Panjab. Guru Arjun who lived in Akbar's time, was a poet and a man of affairs, and he took full advantage of the opportunity, which Akbar's toleration afforded him. He built the famous temple at Amritsar, and made it the religious centre, and gave his following a written



Follower of Guru Nanak called Udasee.



Follower of Guru Nanak called Nirmalee.

rule of faith in the Granth. He imposed upon the Sikhs a systematic levy of contribution, and utilised the money in developing trade which extended far beyond the frontiers of India. His persecution by the Emperor Jehangir, and early death in consequence thereof, excited the Sikhs, and from this time began the persecution of the Mahamadans which changed the spirit of the new faith. His successor Hur Govind advocated the use of arms and love of adventure, and introduced many changes, which calculated to bring about the desired change. The last and the greatest of the Gurus was Govind Singh, under whose leadership, what had come into being as a quiet sect of a religious nature, in course of time became a military power, developed into a powerful military organisation, which ruled for a time the whole of north-western India.

The word Sikh is derived from the word "Sewak" meaning a follower or disciple, and this is true of Nanakpanthis, who are the followers of the first Guru Nanak. Their ascetic orders are divided into (1) Udasees, (2) Nirmalees, (3) Akalees and (4) Suthreh-Sahis.

The Udasees may be called the genuine followers of Nanak, and are devoted to prayer and devotion. They are usually collected in convents, and go about from place to place. They are often under the patronage of some wealthy person or man of rank, and are generally well dressed and of a venerable and imposing appearance. Their office consists in reading and expounding the Adi Granth. This order was founded by Sri Chand, grandson of Nanak.

The Nirmalees:—This order was founded by Bir Singh, and its followers differ little from members of the Udasee sect. They lead a religious life, are solitary, not living like the Udasees in convents or colleges, and lead a speculative life.

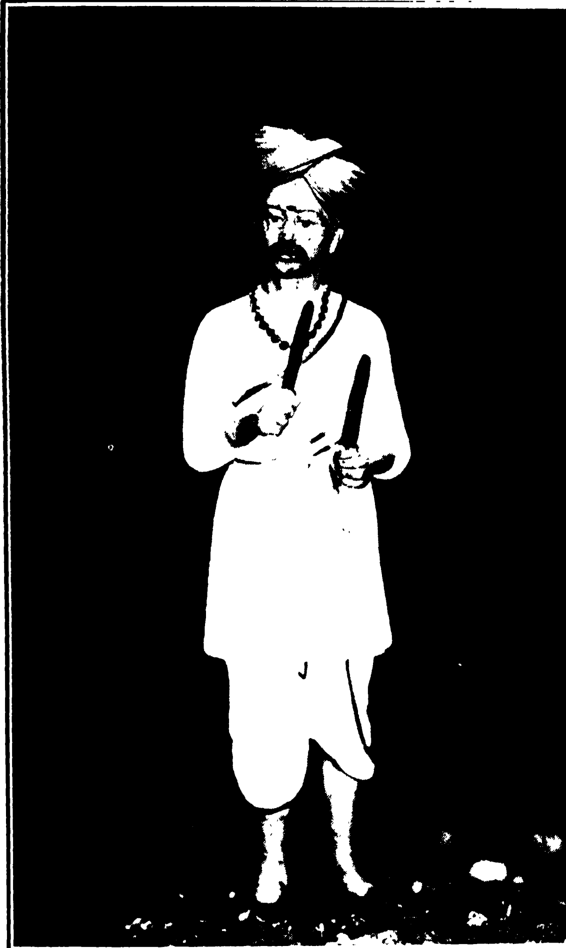
The Akalees are a fanatical order of the Sikh ascetics. Their importance arose in the days of Ranjit Singh, when they constituted the unruly and bravest portion of the Sikh army. The Akalees are distinguished by their dark blue dress, peaked turban often surmounted with steel quoits. This order was instituted by Guru Govind.

The Suthre-Sahis are more numerous and are recognised by the distinguishing marks they wear. They make a perpendicular black streak down the forehead and carry two small black

sticks, which they clash together when they solicit alms. They lead a wandering life and sing songs in Panjabi mostly of a moral or mystic tendency.

Buddhism.

Siddhartha, the founder of Buddhism, was born circum 567 B.C. at Kapilawastu on the borders of Nepal, the son of a petty chieftain of the Sakhya clan. When about 30 years of age, he suddenly left his home and renounced the world. In the beginning he became a disciple of successive teachers, who were advocates of the Tapasvi School then prevalent in India, but did not find satisfaction in their teachings; and he therefore resolved to find out the Truth for himself. Going through a course of spiritual exercises and practising meditation, he at a place now known as Buddh Gaya, formed in his mind his own system. From this time, roughly placed at about 525 B.C. till the time of his death 487 B.C., he spent his days in teaching his principles. He held that the final Truth had appeared in him, and he therefore called himself the "Enlightened". According to him, life is full of suffering, which has its origin in Desire, and he sought to show the way, how this Desire might be extinguished, and man freed ultimately from Karma and consequent transmigration. He addressed himself both to men and women, using the vernacular of the country as the medium of expression for making his appeal direct, to take to monastic life, in which according to his direction, Nirvan (extinction of desire) might be accomplished in this life—a stage leading to Nirvan (final) after death. For the guidance of his followers, he proposed a eight-fold path in his teaching, vigorous intellectual effort to understand it, to apply it to life in detail, and an earnest moral life avoiding the two extremes, namely, a life of luxury and pleasures and a life of extreme asceticism, accompanied with regular meditation. During his lifetime, Gautama was able to attract many followers, and these included both men and women from the highest to the lowest class. These he divided into two classes, Bhikshuks and Bhikshukini (ascetics) and Upasaks and Upashika (laity), and upon the latter lay the obligation to lead a good life, to abstain from injury to animal life, and to support and maintain the monks and nuns. The ascetics were bound by rules governing monastic life, in every part of its detail. It appears probable that soon after Buddha's death, his disciples gathered together in an assembly, and rehearsed



Follower of Guru Nanak called Sutreshahi.



Buddhist Priest.

the various discourses delivered by him, and these were later on embodied in the Vinaya Pitaka.

For the next two hundred years the movement had gained much ground, its literature had gradually taken shape, but differences sprouted up amongst the monks regarding rules of conduct. These appear to have been settled at a second council supposed to have been held at Vaisali. But it was not till Asoka's conversion to the Faith about the year 261 B.C. that Buddhism received special impetus, which converted it from what it was in the beginning, a religion confined to a local religious sect, to one of the greatest religions of the world. Coming greatly under the influence of a Buddhist priest. Acharya Upagupta, embraced Buddhism, and made it the principal duty of his life to spread and support it. For this purpose, he caused his principles of government and ethical system to be incised on rocks put up in different parts of the empire. These found upto now, number about fourteen, besides other minor edicts. He next sent missionaries charged with the sacred duty of spreading Buddhism to far off Bengal in the east, to Cabul and Candahar in the west, to Cashmere and Trans-Himalayan provinces in the north, and to the Konkan, Maharastra, Mysore and Ceylon in the south, the last mission being specially under the charge of his son Mahendra and his daughter Sangamitra. Missions were also sent on similar errands to the distant Greek provinces, Syria, Macedonia, Egypt and Epirus. In his desire to provide comfort for the clergy, Asoka spent large sums in erecting large and magnificent monasteries, and endowed them with money. Two of such monasteries at Pataliputra were seen by Fa-Hien, when he visited the place between 405-411 A.D. The numerous stupas which he caused to be erected over the relics of Buddha or some Buddhist saint testify to the veneration he had for these. The numerous pillars which he caused to be built at places connected with the life history of Buddha, and which he visited during the course of his different pilgrimages, bear testimony to his desire, apart from preserving the memory of his visit, that for all time to come, they should bear witness to his efforts to inculcate into the minds of his subjects, the important and principal tenets of Buddhism. Among the many qualities which Buddhism demands of its votaries, are Toleration and Kindness to all living beings, and these Asoka practised with no uncommon zeal. His sympathies with the

beliefs and practices of other sects have found mention in a special edict, and in the construction of cave dwellings for the members of the Ajivika sect—a class of mendicants closely allied to the Jains. He was charitable alike both to men and animals, as is testified by the different measures he adopted for looking after the comforts and conveniences of travellers, for the establishment of hospitals for animals, building of water-troughs, and the cultivation of special medicinal herbs and plants. Asoka died about the year 232 B.C., and with him for a time departed the glory of the Buddhist faith from Northern India, as his successors were feeble monarchs, who could hardly keep the distant governments under control with the result that they threw off the imperial yoke, and declared their own dependance. Buddhism till Asoka's reign was pure and simple, its doctrines remaining unpolluted with the worship of other gods and goddesses, being free from ceremonials, magic and witchcraft. The Buddhist Canon had by this time been formulated and contained (1) Vinaya, containing articles of confession to be made by monks and rules for every part of conduct of monks and nuns, and (2) Sutta in five groups containing a collection of religious discourses of Buddha, and is important for giving us a picture of the life of ancient India, and of Buddha winning his way amongst all classes by his teaching and discipline, an expression of his feelings for human needs and his firm conviction that he had at last conquered Truth. The spirit of toleration and the necessity for man to follow a virtuous path still remained its dominant feature, and it was in such a state of pristine purity and simplicity that Asoka was able by "his comprehensive and well planned methods of evangelisation" to transform it into one of the greatest religions of the world.

After Asoka, Buddhism seems to have received a set-back because of the political condition of India, and the Suṇga dynasty, which overthrew the Mauryas, leaned more towards Brahmanism; and Pushyamitra one of its earliest kings revived the old Brahmanic-cult by reintroducing animal sacrifice, and according to Buddhist writers, indulged in savage persecution of Buddhism, and burnt their monasteries throughout the country from Magadha to Jallandhar in Panjab. Pushyamitra died in the year 149 B.C., and then followed those chequered phases of political changes, which for a time throw a veil over Indian History. This continued down

to about 20 A.D., when the Kushans came into power under Kadphises I. It was under the rule of the third king of the line Kanishka that Buddhism again continued to receive royal patronage, and the period may be considered as one of the brightest in the history of Buddhism in India. Like Asoka, Kanishka was converted to Buddhism by a Buddhist priest, a circumstance which appears to have taken place some years after his accession to the throne. His earliest coins bear legends in Greek with effigies of the Sun and Moon under Greek names. On later issues, the Greek script is retained, whilst the deities depicted are Gods worshipped by the Greeks, Persians and Indians. Those supposed to be the last of his reign, have the effigy of Buddha Sakyamuni. But the Buddhism which Kanishka adopted, was not the same, old, pure Buddhism of Asoka as founded by Gautama Buddha, but a sort of Neo-Buddhism largely of foreign origin and developed out of interaction between Indian, Parthian and Hellenistic elements. Kanishka had sent his emissaries far and wide outside the Indian continent, and their reports must have contributed largely towards the new development; whilst his own efforts to bring about a sort of compromise with Brahmanism in the land must have equally worked in the same direction. The opening of doors to Buddhist missions, the variety of foreign influences, and the consequent great literary activity of the Buddhist priests in their desire to keep abreast of all culture of the day led to great changes in Buddhist thought and practice, and finally to the creation of a new school, which aimed in fact at hinduising the old faith as to make it more acceptable to the Indian layman and men of other races, who embraced the new faith. In early years reverence was paid to Buddha, his followers who had accepted the ascetic life, and to sacred places which contained relics. It now became the fashion to enrich the stupas and other buildings with masses of beautiful sculptures and with numerous carved images of Buddha and Boodhisatvas, as aid to devotion. Pious Buddhists walked round these stupas with reverence and devotion, and in course of time, these paths were encircled with railings and lofty arched gateways to each of the cardinal points. Further to attract people, showy worship was introduced, processions in which rich and costly images of Buddha were carried were periodically held, and the use of incense at the time of worship was introduced with the result that Buddhist worship rivalled the spectacular attraction of Hindu worship. Similarly

in the field of devotion, a change took place. According to the theory of the old Buddhists, they had faith in God, who according to their teaching was like ordinary mortals, but only in a happier state of existence. He was subject to the same laws of Karma as men, but a Buddhist who had obtained Nirvan, was the highest of all. In Kanishka's time, the Buddhist came to regard Gautama as God's incarnation. Secondly they induced a belief in the existence of Boodhisatvas, who having followed the eight-fold path, had well-nigh attained Buddhahood, and they therefore came to be regarded as mediators between Buddha and man, were supposed to live in the heavens, and to work always for the good of the universe. Their intervention was considered very necessary by men to secure salvation. They were supposed to come down on earth and incarnate themselves as human beings for helping mankind. Finally the deities worshipped by the Brahmins were accepted, and each was given a place in the Buddhist hiearchy of gods under new names, *e.g.*, Brahma of the Brahmins was Maha-Brahma of the Neo-Buddhists, Vishnu, they named Avalokiteshwar, and Civa, they named, Maha-Yogi.

Philosophically the early Buddhists were divided into different schools of thought, but there was no distinct division or schism. There was first the oldest school of thought known under the name of the Sthavira School, which concerned itself about the consideration of Nirvana, Karma, Renunciation, etc. There was at the same time another school, who were known as Sauntrikas, who believed in ' the existence of the external world and held the atomic theory of matter and that perception happens indirectly. Then there was the Realistic School which maintained the existence of all things and clung to the atomic theory of matter and maintained that perception happened directly. Finally in Kanishka's time there arose the Transcendantalists, who believed in Buddha being raised far higher than men, and in his saving power by devotion being forced to this conclusion by the changed notions about Buddha and the Boodhisatvas. The development of this school, better known as Mahayana as distinguished from the old called Hinayana, has been ascribed to Nagarjuna contemporary of the King Kanishka. Kanishka seeing that such a diversity of thought prevailed, decided to convoke a council of Buddhist theologians to obtain authoritative exposition of the Buddhist scriptures, and laid the proposal before his advisor the Venerable Parsva. Under his direction, a

council is said to have been held at Kundanvan in Cashmere attended by over 500 monks. The result of the deliberations of this great council are said to have been copied on copper plates, which were buried under a mound, and these await exploration on some future day. Mr. V. A. Smith is disposed to place the time of the holding of this council somewhere near 100 A.D.

The only two buildings which stood for long time to do honour to the name of Kanishka, were the great Relic Tower, which seems to have been reckoned as one of the wonders of the world, and a monastery of exceptional magnificence built near it. The monastery was seen in a flourishing condition in the 6th century of the Christian era by the Chinese pilgrim Song-Yun, and it continued down to be the centre of Buddhist education to about the 9th century. Both the Tower and the monastery are supposed to have been destroyed by the Mahamadans who came with Mahamad of Ghazni and his successors. In the year 1910 the Archæological Department of the Government of India, whilst conducting their discoveries near Peshawar, unearthed a bronze casket in the ruins of a stupa, which is supposed to be the same built by Kanishka. It was found to contain relics of Buddha, and has on the top two figures standing on the side of the central figure, which is supposed to represent King Kanishka.

Further light now falls on the history of Buddhism in the reign of Samudragupta, 330-375 A.D., when about the year 360, Sri Meghavarna, the Buddhist King of Ceylon, sent two monks to Magadha to visit the monastery built by Asoka, and to do homage to the sacred Boddhi Tree. The monks not meeting with any hospitable reception, returned home and informed the King, who immediately perceived the necessity of having a separate monastery for his own people. Accordingly he despatched a mission to Samudragupta laden with costly gifts with a request for permission to build a monastery. Samudragupta from his early years came under the influence of a Buddhist sage, Vasubandhu, and studied the religion with zeal and earnestness. In consequence, though he leaned towards Brahmanism, he lent a willing ear to the request of the mission, and granted the permission asked for. A splendid convent was built to the north of the Boodhi Tree consisting of three stories, and the same number of halls. The inside decorations were carried

out with great artistic skill, and a statue of Buddha made of gold and silver and studded with precious stones was provided for the inmates to worship. When the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsiang visited the place, he found the convent tenanted by about a thousand monks, and it afforded great hospitality to the pilgrims. His successor Chandragupta II (375-413) was equally tolerant towards the Buddhist faith, and it was during his reign that Fa-Hien visited India in the year 405 and remained in the land for about six years studying Sanskrit and collecting manuscripts on monastic discipline and visiting centres of Buddhist learning. He writes that whilst journeying from the River Indus to Mathura, he saw Buddhism in a flourishing condition, the two ancient monasteries at Pataliputra occupied by about 700 monks, and these were so famed for learning, that students from far and near visited them to attend to the lectures of the learned Buddhist monks. He saw many images of Buddha worshipped, and the Buddhist Rule of Life generally observed. But he at the same time failed to perceive that the rising tide of Brahmanism, now patronised by the Gupta sovereigns, was steadily sapping the foundation of Buddhism, and that places connected with the life history of Buddha, were then already in a state of neglect and ruin. After the death of Chandragupta, the hey-days of Gupta rule seem to be on the wane, and the country was disturbed by foreign aggressions—notably the Huns, who under Mihiragula are credited to have slaughtered many Buddhist monks and followers and desecrated sacred buildings. Fortune seems to have smiled again for a time on Buddhism, when Narsinhagupta Baladitya ascended the throne in the year 485 A.D. He was more inclined towards Buddhism, and he caused to be erected at Nalanda in Magadha, then the principal seat of Buddhist learning in India, a brick building of more than 300 feet in height, and remarkable, according to the testimony of Hiuen Tsiang, " for the delicacy of its decorations, and lavish use of gold and gems in its furniture." In later times, Nalanda became one of the recognised seats of Buddhist learning, and continued down to be so till the close of the twelfth century, when the monasteries with their well stocked libraries were reduced to ashes by the Mahamadans. Philosophically Buddhism during the Gupta rule produced many literary compositions belonging to the old (Hinayana) and new (Mahayana) Schools, the latter conceiving Buddha as the Supreme, boundless in power and wisdom, and surrounded by

Boodhisatvas. A new school of philosophy also arose under the leadership of Asanga, who maintained that Thought alone exists, and therefore man can attain Buddhahood by continued meditation.

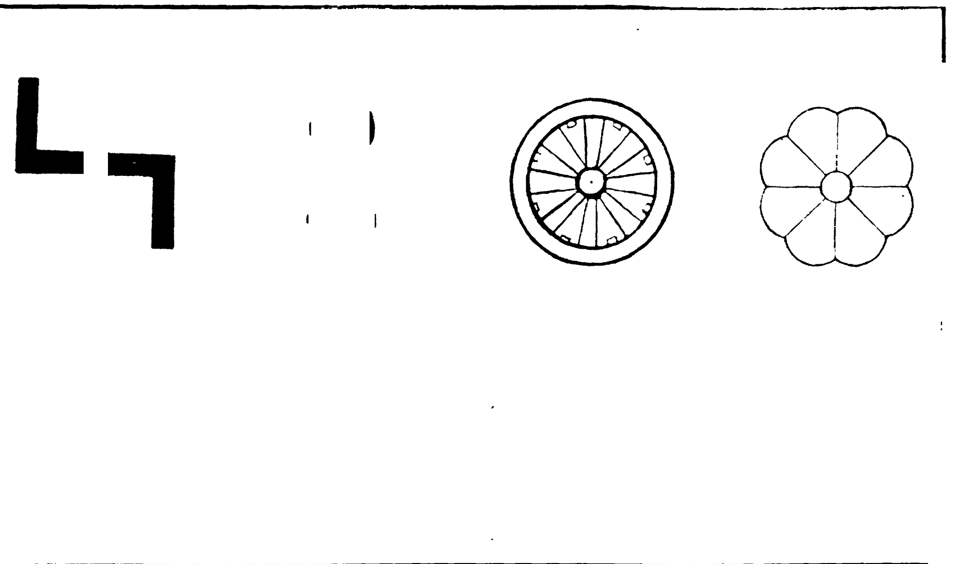
The last phase of a revival in the history of the Faith occurred in the reign of King Harsha of Kanoj, 606-647 A.D., for after him no Indian monarch came to the throne who held sway from the Bay of Bengal to the mouth of the River Indus. When King Harsha began his glorious rule, Buddhism prevailed from Cabul and the North-West Frontier Provinces to Bengal in the East, excepting the midland, which comprised the provinces of Oudh and Agra, in Sindh according to Chachnama, in East Kathiawar and Western Malwa. In his earlier years he effected his great conquests, and consolidated his vast empire. But towards the latter part of his reign, an event happened, which turned the monarch into a devout, pious and philanthropic follower of Gautama's faith. It was during his reign that the famous Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsiang visited India, and remained in the land for about fourteen years recording continually his observations about each state and province, and giving learned discourse with a view to attract people to the faith he preached. Harsha met the Chinese Master of the Law at Ganjam on his expedition to Bengal about the year 643 A.D. where he was induced to accept Buddhism. Brought up under and surrounded by Brahmanic influences, he found Brahmanism too strong for him to be shaken off, and so he divided his devotion between the Brahmanic gods and Buddha, the latter claiming by far a large share. He issued edicts, enforcing Buddhist prohibition against slaughter of animals, caused many religious establishments to be built supporting these by royal grants. For giving the greatest possible publicity to the teaching of his new Master, he convoked a Council at Kanouj, and there amidst pompous ceremonies and lavish expenditure, he worshipped the sacred image of Buddha made of gold and distributed large sums amongst the Brahmin and Buddhist priests. Buddhism in the north or India, according to the writings of Hiuen Tsiang, was still enjoying the favour of the royalty of the time, though it had fallen from the high pedestal it occupied in former days; but when he visited the south of the Peninsula he witnessed a different tale. Here he found the Faith had almost disappeared from Maharastra and in the extreme southern provinces many Buddhist monasteries were

in ruins, and in its place Brahmanism and Jainism struggling against each other to obtain the final victory.

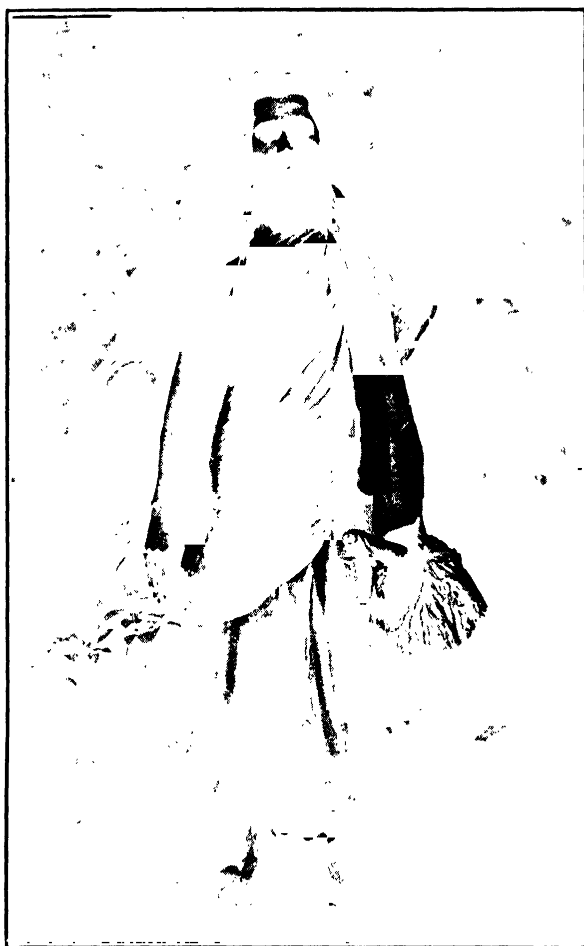
Brahmanism had already been revived under Pushyamitra, and by this time had already begun to assert its importance and former position, though not in its form of pristine purity of the old vedic school, but tinctured with the acceptance and assimilation of aboriginal and foreign forms of worship, and with different schools of thought propounding new dogmas and thoughts. One such movement of thought was the Sakta movement. Naturally Buddhism too did not fail to be influenced by this movement with the result that it slowly became poisoned by Tantraism, it supposed that every Buddha was accompanied by a Sakti on the analogy that the three chief deities of the Hindu Pantheon had their respective Saktees. Like the Sakta worship, the use of wine, flesh, magic and charms were freely made use of, and erotic practices came to be justified from examples of Buddha's life before renunciation. Yoga practices came to be recommended for the acquisition of supernatural powers, with the result that worst forms of abuses crept in. To sum up therefore, the revolution in the popular mind in favour of Brahmanism, the incorporation of Gautama Buddha as one of the incarnations of Vishnu, then most popularly worshipped, and the consequent assimilation of the Faith with the old Faith, and lastly the introduction of Tantric rites and ceremonies led to the downfall of Buddhism in Northern India. After Harsh's death, there was no great Indian king on the throne, who could have lent a helping hand, if he chose; and the advent of the Mahamadan power in the early part of the tenth century removed all chances of any further assistance. Similarly in the south, the same causes were at work in bringing about its downfall, made more potent by the preaching of Kumarila, and later on by the philosophical disquisitions and vigorous efforts of the great Civite and Vaishnavite Acharyas. Finally the rise of the Lingayet sect about the beginning of the thirteenth century dealt the final blow, and made Buddhism disappear from the land.

Jainism.

Jainism, which has its roots in the ancient philosophy of India, has now been accepted by scholars to be of earlier origin than Buddhism. Some of its features are of so striking simplicity, that these can be accepted as primary. These are " their belief in the



Auspicious marks used by the Jainas.



Swetambari Jain Priest

doctrine that there are souls in every particle of the created world, and that for the attainment of final release, the practice of certain austerities, the total abstinence from destruction of life, and the strict observance of moral duties are very necessary." It takes its name from the word Jina meaning a conqueror, that is one who has conquered Karma, and equipped himself with supreme knowledge.

The religion of the Jainas existed in India from very early times, and its origin is ascribed to Sri Rishabha, who according to tradition was the son of a Rajput king, and is said to have become an ascetic. He is the first in the line of the Tirthankars, who according to the Jainas are those, " who show the true way across the troubled ocean of life". He is also known as Adinath, and is held in great esteem by the Jains. In his honour is erected a splendid shrine at a place of the same name in the State of Udaipur, built about the year 1438 by Rana Khumbha at a cost of upwards a million sterling. It consists of three stories, and the interior is inlaid with mosaic of cornelian and agate, an early instance of the art of inlaying. In the absence of any historical record, nothing is known about his successors till we come to Parasnath, who is supposed, according to the opinion of Prof. Jacob's, to have been an historical person and to have lived in the 5th century B.C. The work of unifying and improving the discipline of the homeless monks, known as Ajivikas or those who were outside the pale of Hinduism, is ascribed to him and he is said to have established an order of monks, to which Vardhamana or Mahavir later on joined. He made the following four vows binding upon the members of his fraternity : to abstain from taking life, from telling falsehood, from stealing, and from owning any property. According to Jaina reports he is said to have obtained his final release on Mt. Sumetshekar in Bengal, now known as Parasnath Hill, about 250 years before the death of Mahavir which is placed in the year 468 B.C.

About the 6th century B.C. the strongest centre of Brahmanical learning was round modern Patna. Encircling this on all sides except the north the land was occupied by the Kshatryas, who also applied themselves to learning and produced among them great thinkers. A small suburb, named Kundangrama, in the province of Videha was then held by a powerful chieftain of the Kshatraya clan known by the name of Siddharatha. He attained

great eminence, and in consequence was married to a daughter of the king, who was his over-lord. By this marriage he had two sons, the younger of whom was named Vardhaman. He duly received his education and in course of time was married; but secular life had few attractions for him and in his 30th year when both his parents were dead, he left his house and set out to lead the life of a mendicant. He thereafter was living as an ascetic leading a life of the asceticism when at the end of twelve years spent in penance and meditation he attained supreme knowledge, or in the language of the Jains he was a Kevalin, that is omniscient and comprehending all objects and knew all the conditions of the whole world. From this time he was a religious reformer and the head of a sect called "Nigranathas" free from fetters. He went from place to place winning people to his own faith and doctrines. His message to the world was, that birth and caste were no hindrance to final emancipation, but if any thing came in its way, it was karma, which bound men to successive births, and this had to be destroyed to obtain everlasting happiness. He is said to have visited many places during the course of his peregrinations, and to have enlisted the sympathies of many ruling princes and nobles. The closing years of his life were spent at Pava, modern Pavapuri, in the district of modern Patna, where he breathed his last. Pavapuri is now a famous place of pilgrimage to the Jains.

According to some writers, the true estimate of Vardhaman's work for Jainism lies in the reform he introduced in the old teachings of Parasnath, and the introduction of more stringent rules of conduct for the order of which he was the acknowledged leader. He also introduced four orders among the members of his following: monks and nuns, laymen (Sravaks) and lay-women. The monks (Yatis) he divided into eleven different schools, each under the headship of one of his disciples. The nuns were placed under the headship of one of them. The monks and nuns were to lead a religious life, and to practise poverty and continence. The laymen and women, who were house holders, were kept together by a code of rules of conduct as regards observance of certain practices, presenting offerings and paying homage to Tirthankars, and upon whom was thrown the duty of supporting the order of monks and nuns. This organisation gave the Jains a firm foothold in India, and the root firmly planted amongst the laity enabled Janism to withstand the storm that drove Buddhism ultimately out of India.

After his death Mahavir's work was continued by his disciples, but it was not till we come to the leadership of Bahdrabahu about 317 B.C. that we have one of the greatest epochs in the Jain history. He was himself a great scholar, and is credited with the authorship of a commentary on the Canonical books and a great work on astronomy. Jain tradition asserts that it was under his leadership that a party of the Jains, who were followers of the school of Mahavir, and therefore unclad, being driven by famine conditions in Magadha, migrated southwards and finally settled at Sravana Belgola in Mysore. The subsequent history of the Jainas is a narrative of the many schisms that took place under the leadership of different leaders till about the year 82 A.D., when the split which had already taken place in Mahavir's time became more pronounced, and the Jains have since been divided into two main divisions—one known as the Cvetambaras, and the other as Digambaras. The main points of difference between the two are : that the Cvetambaras decorate their images of the Tirthankars they worship, whereas the Digambaras leave them without any foreign aid of ornaments ; the Cvetambaras maintain the necessity for their monks and nuns of carrying their own utensils, etc., whilst the Digambaras deny it, and lastly the Cvetambaras maintain that the Agamas or the Canonical books are the direct works of the disciples of Tirthankars, whereas the Digambaras say that they are the compositions of subsequent Jain Teachers. The progress of Jainism after Mahavir's death seems to have been slow, but about the 3rd century B.C. it obtained a remarkable foothold as far as Panjab in the west and Bengal and Orissa in the east. In the south it was steadily growing from the time it was introduced. An edict of Asoka about 242 B.C. contains a reference to the employment of the Jains in the business of their own Church. An inscription of Kharavela on the Khandgiri rock near Cuttock shows that Jainism had by the middle of the 2nd century spread as far south as Orissa. Mathura had become a stronghold of Jainism in the first century of the Christian era. Hiuen Tsiang found many adherents of the Jaina faith in the north and more in south, when he visited India in King Harsha's time. The next event of greatest importance in the history of Jainism was the appearance of the famous Hemacharya about the year 1121 A.D., who was a very prolific writer chiefly in Sanskrit and one of the firm adherents of the Jaina faith, and under him it became the State religion of Gujrath, and

its head-quarters were shifted from Bihar—the land of its birth—to the dominions of the converted Jaina King. In the south Jainism received royal patronage under the early Chalukyas in the 6th and 7th century, and Amoghavarsha Rastrakuta 815-877 A.D. chiefly patronised the Digambara sect, who included amongst them many of the agricultural and trading classes. In the Tamil land, Jainism prevailed from about the 5th century of the Christian era, and according to the writings of Hiuen Tsiang it was in a flourishing condition, when he visited the south. It also exercised great influence on the Tamil literature of the time from about the 7th to the 9th century of the Christian era. During the period the Vizianagar kings the faith was most dominant at Tulnad, the country between the Western Ghauts and the sea, and one of the most trusted generals of Harihara II was Iruguappa, a Jain, who erected a grand temple known as the " Oil woman's temple."

Jainism had for long to contend against its rival faith founded by Buddha and from the time of the revival of Brahmanism under Pushyamitra in the north, which also did not fail to influence the religious movements in the south, it began to lose its former hold on the popular mind. The doctrine of Karmakand had been preached by Kumarilla and accepted very largely by the people. Him followed Sri Shankaracharya and the other Vaishnava Acharyas who succeeded in winning over a majority of the people to their own faiths. The rise of the Lingayet sect under Basava in the twelfth century of the Christian era finally contributed to check the progress of the faith in the south.

As so much stress is laid on asceticism, it may be of interest to give in a concise form the life story of a Jain ascetic. For a Jaina, asceticism began with his taking the Diksha or initiation. It was first of all necessary to practise discipleship of a Sadhu (Yati) for a year, when the future Yati received is initiation. The candidate had first of all to give up all his earthly belongings to his relatives, and then to put on the robes of a Sannyasi. He had next to perform the ceremony of removal of hair, which at times was a very painful process, as the hair had to be plucked out by the root. He was now a homeless wanderer, possessing nothing and dependent for his very existence on the bounty of others. Among the duties that were now imposed upon him, the prime one was to guard against any injury to any living being, even a small insect. He had to live in a monastery along with other monks subservient and obedient to the orders of the Superior monk. Above all, he had to take five great vows: (1) to practise Ahimsa, (2) to practise



Swetambari Jain Yati



Female Jain Yati

truthfulness, (3) to practise honesty, (4) to be a Brahmachari or coenobite and (5) to accept renunciation—to cast off bonds of friendship and love. The next step in the ascetic's life was that of an Upadhya or Instructor in the religious lore. He was next raised to the position of an Acharya, if he possessed the necessary qualifications in learning and the ability to lead. No account of the Jains can be interesting without at least a passing reference to the number of temples built by them in honour of their Tirthankars, whom they all hold in the highest esteem. The story of Jaina architecture begins to be clear from about the 11th century of the Christian era, the early vestiges of any architecture having been swept away by the ravages of time and devastation caused by wars. From this time, which marks the beginning of the golden age of Jaina architecture, we meet the style complete and perfect in all its parts, as the result of long experience and artistic development. For two centuries onwards, it progressed towards richness in detail and carving and then gradually declined. Generally the Jaina Temple has an open porch, a closed hall of Assembly, and an inner shrine or cell, in which the cross-legged idol of the Tirthankar is placed and worshipped. The whole is surrounded by a closed Courtyard carrying on its inner wall numerous separate cells, each containing the image of a Tirthankar. The main temple is surmounted by a pyramidal roof ending in the representation of a water-pot. The inner shrine is guarded by richly carved doorways, the Assembly Hall has very little carving, but the outer portico is a very "Fairy land of Beauty" showing examples of workmanship wrought out into the shape of hanging pendants, carved struts between pillars and delicate foliage in white snowy marble.

It is the peculiarity of the Jainas that they grouped together their temples at one place, which in consequence came to be called "City of Temples." We have such temples at Girnar, Palitana otherwise known as Satrunjaya, Mount Abu and Parasnath, and in other scattered localities. Those at Girnar are famous for their superior beauty, whilst those at Abu add beauty to their picturesque surroundings. The main object of the Jains in building their temples was offering prayer in stone and this was looked upon as a means to secure salvation. Hence it came about that Kings, wealthy nobles and even middle class people vied with each other in the erection of these sacred buildings at great cost.

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